

VOL. 19 NO. 4

AUGUST

1906

PRICE 25cys

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THE WHITE CAT

By Gelett Burgess

PART FIRST

I

I CAME to myself with a disturbing sense that something was wrong with me. My discomfort, increasing steadily, resolved itself into two distinct factors—a pain in my side at every breath and a throbbing ache in the top of my head. I realized that I was in bed, and the first strangeness of it struck me. I could not account for it. The wild, spicy odor of flowers came to me, adding to my perplexity. Then I opened my eyes.

The place was so dimly lighted that for some seconds my sluggish wits were unable to interpret the blotches of shadow and the vague glimmering spots. These, however, gradually resolved themselves into comprehensible forms. I perceived that I was in a strange room, large and airy; for even in the obscurity I got a feeling of free, clean space, and of that chaste emptiness which is apt to distinguish the guest chamber of a well-kept house. I heard, now, the steady, deliberate ticking of a clock a little way off, and somewhere below was a small grinding sound, so low as to be almost a mere vibration, like a coffee-mill in operation. Near by, a door closed and latched softly.

I moved and attempted to sit up, but a sharp stab in my side warned me that my hurt was perhaps more serious than I had thought. There was a lump on my head too, which probably accounted for my lapse of consciousness.

Setting my memory painfully to work, groping back through the darkness of my mind for something to ex-

plain the mystery, much as one might descend a dark, unlighted stairway, I came upon the last fact that had been recorded by my brain. I had been putting on speed—the road through the woods was straight, level and deserted—hoping to get up to town early in the afternoon. The steering gear of my motor-car had given way. I had felt the wheels suddenly veer, then grate and buckle as the front of the car went down and the rear was thrown up and over with the momentum, sending me flying through the air.

I wondered, lazily, how much the machine had suffered. Then, I must have dropped off to sleep again, for, when I next opened my eyes, there was a flickering ray of light in the room. This time I was keenly alert, mentally, desirous of some explanation of my situation. Where was I, and who had cared for me?

The light grew brighter, still wavering, slanting across the wall where it rocked and shifted, casting long, distorted shadows that danced up and down. Someone was evidently coming upstairs with a light. The door was hidden by a projecting angle of the wall, however, and so, for a few moments I saw nobody.

In those seconds the room was illuminated gradually more and more, showing a white painted wainscot with a dull green wall above, where a few Japanese prints hung. Opposite my bed was a window with small, old-fashioned panes; there was another beside me. The rays glinted on the polished sides of several pieces of old mahogany furniture and flared yellow on brass can-

dlesticks and the gilded frame of an eagle mirror. Finally the glare stopped its undulating, the shadows grew steadier on the wall, and as I gazed eagerly for a first glimpse of my visitor, a young woman, bearing a silver candlestick came into the room.

She looked immediately over to where I lay, and then, catching my surprised stare, her expression changed wonderfully from a rather pathetic abstraction to an animated interest. With something not quite a smile on her face she walked nearer my bed, and stood for a moment without speaking, still looking at me. Her attitude hinted that she saw in me something—as if, for instance, it were a sort of picturesqueness—which was unexpected enough to appeal to her imagination. She rested for a moment, poised and calm, but intensely attentive, fascinated.

And I, at the same time, was instantly conscious of so curious a sentiment that I must stop to attempt to describe it.

I conceived myself to be a connoisseur in women, and I estimated her at first sight as one unique, even extraordinary. But though, to my mind, she was indubitably beautiful, it was not her beauty that for the moment thrilled me. It was chiefly her "newness," the very novelty of her visitation. I felt a sudden, compelling desire to prolong the mystery of her presence rather than have it explained. I tried, mentally, to delay her first word, to hold her back from any definite explanation till my eyes had had their fill of her—till they had, so to speak, solved her equation—till my wonder had spent itself in the vision, exhausting all its possibilities of delight. Her charm was, in its unexpectedness, so alluring, that she was like a pleasant dream which one lingers with and detains.

She was small, but her head was so exquisitely proportioned to her body that one did not notice her size. I have called her young, though she was twenty-seven, for her graceful figure and pose were still girlishly maintained. The shape of her small head was defined

by a quaint coiffure, the dark, fine hair being banded in an encircling plait up past her tiny ears and over, like a coronal, showing a sweeping high-bred curve over her low brow. All this gave her a tender, virginal aspect; but her soft, deep-brown eyes were so saddened by warm shadows below the lids, her mouth was so tremulously sensitive, with its slightly-parted lips, and the little lines that women fear had begun to write her history so suggestively upon her face, that, as I gazed at her I saw a woman who had lived and suffered, a woman as intense as she was delicate in all her moods.

She was clad in a bewilderingly feminine *peignoir* of lace and embroidery, open at the neck, and covered with another long, straightly-hanging garment of shimmering pale green silk, richly decorated with odd patterns. This gave her, to my wondering eyes, quite the appearance of a medieval princess, or the heroine of some old fairy tale. The impression was intensified by the long chain she wore, set with fire opals which flashed in the candle-light. From it, below her waist, there hung a golden star.

And, strangest of all, most provocative to my fancy, she also appeared, with extraordinary sympathy, almost with prescience, to feel something of my wonder as she paused and stood silent, retarding her greeting, in answer to my unspoken thought. While our eyes held each other in that marvelous communion, she did not smile; it was rather from her quivering mouth that I got the idea that she, too, was touched by the spell, and was keenly alive to the potentiality of the situation. She seemed to hold her breath lest the wonder should pass too soon.

That moment was as sublimely unreal as anything I have ever known, and, within its unmeasurable limits, as potent. It was tense, instinct with fine, secret emotions too faint for analysis. Messages came and went, electric. It was, in short, the psychological moment that comes but once to any friendship, and, coming, is usually hurried past without appreciation of

its mysterious charm. It was that most suggestive of preludes, an instinctive, conscious pause upon the magic threshold of Romance. That she felt its quality also, overpowered me. The minute passed like a falling star, and in its glory we seemed to travel miles together.

Then, with a visible effort she spoke.

Her voice was light and clear, so expressively modulated that I have, despite myself, to compare it only to fairy footsteps passing over flower-tops. Its tones poised and hovered as if on the wing, though they were as sure as the melody of an old song. It was, above all else, graceful, and usually it held a trace of mental eagerness, but its characteristic quality came more from delicate nuances of feeling than from any vibrant intensity. It had the fluidity of running water.

With her first word she smiled, and some of the melancholy escaped from her eyes.

"Oh, you are better now! I'm so glad!"

The silver thread of magic that had bound us was broken, and the episode became real and humorous on the instant. I could not help smiling in my turn, for assuredly, from my point of view, I was, physically, decidedly the worse. I took it from her, by her remark, that I had been ill.

"Yes," I replied, "I suppose I am better, since you say so, but I seem to be quite bad enough. How long have I been here?"

"Twenty-four hours. You have been a little delirious, you know. I was getting quite anxious about you; though the doctor said there was no danger."

She came nearer, and put her small, beautiful hand upon my cheek. I noticed that she wore no rings. The touch of her fingers was soft and cool.

"I'm glad your fever has gone," she said. "Have you much pain?"

I felt sore all over, and there was trouble with my side when I moved; my head seemed to be splitting. But I was so much more interested in her, and how I came to be there, that I dis-

missed my symptoms with a shrug, and asked what had happened.

"You were thrown from your automobile," she said, "and you were pretty badly shaken up. There was a rib broken, and a slight concussion of the brain, I believe, but nothing serious. You'll have to stay here several days, at least, and keep quiet. Dr. Copin had to go back to town, and I must notify him that you are all right now. You mustn't fret about it, for you are perfectly welcome to stay here and it won't trouble us in the least. Only, I'm afraid you'll be terribly bored. It's quiet here, and I'll be rather dull company."

"I'm not worrying, I assure you," I said. "I'm in no hurry to get well!"

She smiled again faintly, but with a quick appreciation, and took a seat in an arm-chair which stood beside my bed. I caught a glimpse of a green silk stocking and an exquisitely small foot in a fantastically shaped slipper.

She went on: "I have been a good deal troubled because we have, of course, no idea who you are. I was afraid that some of your friends might be alarmed about you. So, if there is anyone we can notify, or send for, give me the address and the message, and I'll send it over to the telegraph office at the Harbor, or I can telephone for you, if there's anyone in town. Dr. Copin could call and explain your condition, if you prefer."

As she leaned her face on her slender hand and looked at me, she added, "Your motor has been taken care of, so you needn't worry about that. Uncle Jerdon hauled it into the stable, and it can stay there until you have a chance to have it repaired. I believe the front wheels are ruined."

"You were good to take me in and to get a doctor," I said, watching the tiny vertical lines come and go in her forehead.

"Oh, Dr. Copin happened to be with me when you were brought in by Uncle Jerdon. I really don't know how you managed to escape with your life."

"I didn't deserve to escape. I was

running considerably over the speed limit, I imagine. I wanted to get back to town early." How much rather would I have discussed the queer little corners of her lips that changed so distractingly, and the transparent shadow under her cheekbone that spiritualized her whole expression now and again!

"Oh, I must take your message!" she exclaimed, a little embarrassed by the pause that had fallen.

She rose and went over to an antique secretary, bringing back a pad of paper and a pencil. Reseating herself, she awaited for me to dictate. I thought awhile and then gave her a short report of my condition to be sent to my partner. Having written this down she went out of the room quietly, leaving the candle with me. No sooner had she left than my pain returned. For the time I had forgotten all about it.

In spite of this, the thought of her filled me with a restful peace. I didn't in the least want to know who she was, so long as I might see her, and hear her talk to me in that smooth, melodious, eager voice, whose sound had established her convincingly as a lady of rare promise. The prospect of having to spend several days in her society, or, at least near her, was as pleasant a thought as I could well imagine. The fruit of our moment was a mystery, rich and fragrant, which I wished only not to destroy. I found myself trying, in her absence, to recall each feature of her face, her poses, and her hands so keenly alive and full of graceful gesture. That I did not wonder who she was—what was her name, her situation, her history—came, perhaps, from the state of bodily weakness in which my accident had left me, but it seemed to me then that it was not merely the passivity of my physical state; it was an epicurean joy I took in tasting my impressions drop by drop.

Meanwhile, as I thought it all over, my eyes wandered over that part of the room visible in the candle-light, from the four-posted bed in which I lay, and almost unconsciously I noted the many evidences of taste and wealth.

The furniture was all of antique style, undoubtedly genuine specimens of the best designs of the later Colonial period.

The Japanese prints were the only pictures visible that I could see. They seemed like Utamaro's and Hiroshige's, mostly, though near by were a couple of Yoshitora's and Toyokuni's brilliant actresses, veritable riots of color against the dull green of the wall. The floor was of oak parquetry, covered with Persian rugs of what I knew to be rare weaves. Altogether, the room had, in its severe formal way, the dignity of a museum.

She came back, after about ten minutes, with a tray of toast and tea and the most appetizing of lamb chops.

"Do you feel hungry?" she asked, setting the tray down upon a stand at the head of the bed.

As I assented most heartily, she leaned over and propped the pillows up behind my back, and then set the silver salver before me on the spread. Drawing up her chair, she sat down near enough to pour the tea and hand me what else I required. As she did so I noted the delicate way she held everything she touched—her fingers slightly parted naturally, curling like an acanthus leaf.

"You say that I have been out of my head?" I began.

"Yes, at intervals, since yesterday afternoon."

"I dimly remember it, now. Yes, it was curious. Somehow, though, it seems to me that there were two women here, though never at the same time, I think—but no doubt I got it all mixed up."

She looked down quickly, as if confused, but she replied, "Oh, it must have been Leah, the other one. She's my maid; or, perhaps, rather more my companion. You must see her. I think she's wonderful. I wonder if you will!" She made the last remark under her breath, as if she spoke to herself rather than to me.

She went to the door and called, "Leah!" So few persons can raise their voices prettily, that I was delighted to hear it sound as musical as

when she spoke to me. As she returned the light shone on her soft-flowing, silken gown, making it look like frosted silver. In a few moments, Leah entered the room, bearing a lighted lamp.

I was surprised, I confess, after what my hostess had said, perhaps as a test of my sensibility, to see that the maid was a negress; but, after giving her my first glance, I was still more surprised to see that she was of a kind one seldom sees, the best type, in fact, of Northern negro. As she approached us she had the bearing of a woman of great refinement and a face which, though uncompromisingly dark, showed an extraordinary mental if not moral caste. Her skin was a warm brown, something of the color of a Samoan, though more reddish than mulatto in tinge. This I found afterward was the result of a remote crossing with American Indian blood; it was just enough to richen the color, and to keep down some of the negroidal fullness of the lips and modify the crispness of her curling hair. Leah might, indeed, be considered beautiful; what could not, at least, be denied, was the impression of character which was stamped upon her. It was patent in her face, her carriage and her voice. I watched her in admiration. There was a neatness and immaculate cleanness about her, and I could easily understand how my hostess might regard her as a friend.

Leah's affection for her mistress was evident by the sympathetic manner in which she listened, and by the softness of her look, when her eyes fell on my hostess. There was in that look more than the traditional fondness of a negro "Mammy" for her charge. I felt immediately one of those quick reactions one sometimes has with servants, or with other persons whom social customs have relegated to a conventionally inferior position. It was a case of spiritual "*noblesse oblige*." Seeing her so fine, so sensitive, so tactful, I was myself put unconsciously upon my best behavior. I could not forget this in any look or any word I gave her. I was constantly watching

myself lest I, a guest, a man of a dominant race, should, in consideration and in delicacy, fall behind this servant, this negress. It was a curious delicacy she seemed to enforce.

I can give this effect of Leah upon me, but it is not so easy to describe the cause. She effaced herself, she kept her place rarely. But with all this, she radiated—she had a potent personality. She put down the lamp, she straightened the covers of my bed, answered a few questions, speaking in a rich contralto voice, and went out. That was all. But in those few moments she had impressed me.

It was, no doubt, because of my enjoyment in watching, silently, what went on, that gave my companion the idea that I was exhausted. She apparently at any rate inferred that I wished to be left alone, and, rising, she took the tray from my lap and set it down while she readjusted my pillows. Then, removing a little silver Nuremburg bell, she took up the tray again, and rose to leave me.

"I'll leave the bell here at the head of your bed, Mr. Castle," she said (she had learned my name, of course, when she took my message), "and Leah will be glad to do anything for you that you wish."

As she turned, she looked back, smiling.

"Oh, I haven't told you my own name, yet, have I! I'm Miss Fielding—Joy Fielding. There's nobody here but Leah and me, except Uncle Jerdon, our man-of-all-work, and King, the Chinaman. Midmeadows is a lonely place, though it's lovely in the Summer. Well, I hope you'll be able to sleep well, and be much better in the morning. I'll hope to see you then. Good night!" She left me after placing the lamp just out of sight.

Later, Leah entered, bringing me some books to read, in case I should be wakeful. I dipped into them all immediately, seeking for further evidence of Miss Fielding's taste. One was of poems, one of essays, one of short stories, and a novel.

The house was silent. I heard nothing.

ing until quite late, when the two women came upstairs to retire. By their voices and footsteps, I made out that Leah slept in the room next to mine, and Miss Fielding across the hall, further off. There was some soft conversation, Leah's voice deep and rich, Miss Fielding's rising several notes above, always with that fluttering, delicate quality which I had noticed. Then the doors closed, and I heard nothing more except, somewhere below, a heavy rhythmic snoring, which I assumed came from "Uncle Jerdon's" room.

There came to me now one of those weary, irksome vigils of the sick, when the darkness and the pain seem to coöperate to stretch out the hours to infinite lengths. I tried one position and another, I lighted the candle and put it out again, but my discomfort and my sleeplessness persisted. I could think of nothing else but Joy Fielding, Joy Fielding, Joy Fielding! I think that a little of my delirium returned, also; but all through my torment I kept repeating to myself that I did not want to know who she was. I refused to speculate upon that, except in ways that were romantic and fantastic. What matter-of-fact, commonplace explanation of her life there might be, I wanted to hold off as long as possible.

II

I was awakened early by the sunshine which came pouring across my bed from the window opposite, lighting up the white wainscoting and showing the room now, clean and brightly distinct to the least detail of the crisp Japanese prints upon the wall.

One sash and the window shade had been left up, and I could see the slope of a hill which rose behind the house, seeming to shut the place in. The other window was filled with the waving boughs of an apple-tree. The day was fine and balmy; the fresh air of the morning swept deliciously over my bed. It was maddening to have to lie there helpless.

Before long I heard doors opening and closing below, and the sounds of preparations for breakfast—the rattling of a stove, a pump that squeaked whimsically like a braying donkey, the clatter of pots and pans. With the odors of flowers and damp earth the smell of coffee came up to me, mingled, too, with a whiff from the stable. Then the clock, whose hourly chimes had measured for me the slow march of the night, struck seven with a peal of golden notes.

I heard footsteps come upstairs to the hall outside my half-opened door. There was a soft tapping, across the way, and Leah's voice asked quietly:

"What would you like for breakfast, Miss Joy?"

I could just make out the reply in Miss Fielding's blithe tones:

"Oh, just a couple of butterflies' wings, Leah, and a drop of rose-dew, please!"

How pretty it sounded! From another, it might have seemed silly to me, but not from her. I was amused at her fancy. Miss Fielding, then, was a poet. It was all so in key with the freshness of the morning and the gay, sweet sunshine!

I was more comfortable, now, and more sane. So, as I lay awaiting her I wondered how such a woman, so instinct with refinement and with the air of having had considerable social experience, was to be found in so far-away a place. I knew of no residences in this vicinity except an occasional farmhouse; it was remote even from any village. The sight of her as she appeared last night in her elegant negligée came back to me, like the scene of a play. I longed to see her again to discover if, perhaps, I had not exaggerated it all, or even had not dreamed of one so exquisitely gracious.

Leah, also, was a part of the strangeness. She had none of the disturbing beauty of the quadroon—her beauty was without *diablerie*, it was far from showing any sensuality. It was even spiritual in type. Her face, as I brought it up, was more than intelligent: it was lighted by an inward

vision. The more I thought of her, the more I wondered if I had not been tricked by my impressionability, by the strangeness of my adventure, by the glamour of the night awakening. To put it to the test, I took advantage of Miss Fielding's suggestion and rang the bell.

Leah appeared in a few moments, and came a little shyly into the room. She wore a clean, fresh, crisp gown of blue, like a hospital nurse's uniform, and was as trim and dignified. No, I had not been mistaken. The light of day showed her still more remarkable than I had remembered. Her regular features, her smooth, coffee-colored skin, her well-kept shapely hands, all testified to an extraordinary breeding.

"Are you ready for your breakfast, sir?" she asked. Her voice was like honey as she inquired how I had passed the night, and apologized for Uncle Jerdon's snoring.

"I'll bring your water first," she suggested, and retired, noiselessly, to return in a moment with a bowl, some towels and toilet-articles.

She seemed a little embarrassed by the situation, but assisted me in sitting up. Then, finding that I could do for myself well enough, she went downstairs, and by the time I had finished my washing, she was back with the tray.

"Miss Joy will be in to see you in a little while," she said, as she made me comfortable with dexterous adjustments of my pillows.

But for her "sir," she had in no way acted as a servant, though, on the other hand, she had assumed no attitude of equality. I could not help admiring the fine neutrality she maintained without committing herself to either rôle. All my first impressions of her were intensified by this demeanor, and I awaited the first opportunity of assuring her by my own manner of my lack of prejudice on account of her color. Indeed it was not long before I was almost unconscious of it, so far as any social distinction was concerned, as any child might have been.

Miss Fielding came in, a little later,

dewy and shining from her bath, dressed all in white—an embroidered linen blouse and a short skirt of serge, which made her seem even younger than I had remembered. The sight of her expressive, thoughtful, eager face, and the music in her sympathetic voice gave my room quite another aspect. It became a stage again where last night's drama would go on. How long I had waited for her, and now she was come! Only an invalid, perhaps, can understand the difference in atmosphere in that first quick sight of an expected delightful presence to one who has waited for the weary hours to go by and bring the wished-for vision.

She made a few kind inquiries as to my condition, moving meanwhile about the room, disposing of the fresh roses she had brought, lowering the window sashes and raising the shades, rapid and graceful as a bird on the wing. She was all modern, now; the medieval princess had given place to something more complex, and as much more interesting. Every word, inflection of her voice, every gesture of her hand, every expression of her mobile face showed subtlety of thought and sentiment; she was obviously a creature of fine distinctions, of nuances of feeling, though at present her talk was as simple and joyous as a child's. That simplicity of hers, however, was the simplicity of a Greek temple, made up of subtle ratios and proportions, of imperceptible curves and esoteric laws.

She drew up a chair, at last, and sat down beside me. We looked at each other frankly, and smiled, aware of a common thought, the desire to prolong the situation as far as we might. This quickness of her imagination was a delight. But the game was becoming too humorous, now, in broad daylight, for us to keep it up. Our romance was in danger.

"I'm bursting with the obvious," I remarked.

She shook her finger at me with spirit. "If you dare!"

"Oh, I'll not be the first. Man

though I am, I can restrain my curiosity."

How quickly her face changed! An almost infantile look came into it, as she said:

"There are so many more curious things than curiosity, if you know what I mean. Curiosity is such a destructive process, don't you think?"

"And this is creative? The not satisfying it, I mean."

"Yes, wonder is and mystery. It ramifies so. It splits the ray." She made a queer, mystical gesture, all her own.

"Oh, it quite blossoms!" I said. "I breathe all sorts of perfumes never smelt."

Her eager look came back, and she smiled joyously. "How quick you are! I wish we could keep it a while! I would have liked to marry Bluebeard! What a splendid dowry he gave! Oh, I would never have opened the door! There was so much more outside than in, wasn't there? But now the rôle is yours; you must be Bluebeard's wife—or Robinson Crusoe. Oh, you must stay on the island—this island, with me, and not try to get off. There are a few little places we can explore without danger—will you be satisfied with them?"

Somehow I got the spirit of it, as at hearing some words of a strange language eloquently spoken. She was warning me off—but from what? I would find out soon enough, should the meaning need to be made more definite. It was like a game of jackstraws; if I did not play gingerly I would bring down the commonplace upon us. My situation was delicate—it almost seemed that I had arrived in some way inopportunely.

But she had gone on. "Did you read my books?" she asked, taking up one of them.

"I read that one—the poems. I got quite lost in them."

"Which ones?" She looked up from the book eagerly.

"The Journey", and,"—I hesitated—"The Riders!" I was watching her face earnestly.

"Oh, how right you are!" She was perfectly simple about it. There was no conceit in her. "It means, doesn't it, that we already have a language? But you must read the essays, too. Then maybe we'll have a philosophy, too."

"I'll explore them with pleasure." I tried to keep the appeal out of my voice. "I have such a lot of things to do before I go."

She got this quite as I intended. "Well, we'll be perfectly natural and let come what may, as it seems to be all decided for us. We won't force the game. But I'm afraid you'll never be contented. You'll leave the island first, I'm quite sure."

I protested; she shook her head, slowly. I knew she was thinking very hard of something. Her smile was wistful, her eyes, always fixed on mine, were almost somber in their expression.

"Would you dare promise?" I knew now there was something behind all this; some fear of my presence.

"Shall I?" I fenced, more to draw her on, than from any doubt of her meaning, or reluctance to agree with her wish.

"It's base of me—it's foolish, too, for it can really do no good. But, you see, I don't quite know you, do I?"

"And don't quite want to?" I was unkind enough to say, but only with the same motive as before. I wanted to get at the bottom of it—find out what it was she dreaded, and dared not acknowledge that she did.

She was a little hurt and said that it wasn't fair to say so, that I wasn't playing the game. I was properly contrite, and, for the moment, gave up the duel.

"Let it be a promise then," I said.

At this, I thought she looked relieved and that she should be so at my bare word touched me. It did cross my mind that, perceiving my adaptability to this sort of affair, she might perhaps have taken an adventitious means of heightening the romance of the situation with such innuendo; but she seemed to me to be altogether too direct for that, and too sapient, as well.

"Thank you. I may hold you to that promise. Does that seem ungracious?"

There it was. There was most definitely something which she didn't wish me to know, and which my advent jeopardized. I was truly sorry for her now, and a little embarrassed at my position. Meanwhile her eyes were steadily questioning mine, as if to make sure that I was to be trusted. I took up her last remark to let down the tensivity of her mood.

"You couldn't be ungracious, I'm sure. I would as soon suspect Leah!"

She laughed more freely. "Oh, I'm so glad you appreciate her! That says more for you than all the rest."

"The rest?" I insisted, quite ready for a compliment.

She gave it to me with her head a little on one side, and her right eyebrow, the irregular one, whimsically upraised.

"Yes. Your keeping it up so well, you know."

"Oh, I'll keep it up! It's the chief charm of being here, flat on my back, in a strange place. I'm sure it will be most amusing."

"I'm not so sure. I'm full of moods and whims—you're going to be terribly disappointed in me sometimes—though that sounds like vanity—and I may take advantage of your complaisance, of your promise, that is. I hope you won't regret it."

So it rested, my promise not to be too inquisitive (for I took its meaning to be that), given and accepted. It quite whetted my appetite, you may be sure. If all this talk seems fine-spun, it is my fault in the telling of it, for, in the give-and-take we perfectly understood each other. I cannot, of course, give her delicate inflections, but these, with her looks and gestures, said as much as her words.

But if this equivocal conversation was vague and shadowy, she could pass into the sunshine as deftly. She seemed to do so now, as she arose and went to the open window and whistled. A chorus of barks answered her. She turned to me.

"I must go down to my dogs," she said. "I wish you could see them—that is, if you like collies. I have five, all thoroughbreds—they're beauties! You'll have to get acquainted with them as soon as you're able to go downstairs."

She leaned a little out of the window and called, "Hi! Nokomis!" drawing out the vowels. A deep bark responded.

"Hiawatha!" she called next, and she was answered by a sharp frenzied yelping. "Minnehaha!" followed—she almost sang the name, which was replied to like the others. Then Chevalier and John O'Groat greeted her in turn.

"I'm going to take them for their morning run," she said, as she left me. "I'll examine you on the essays when I come back."

She went down, and soon after I heard her talking, evidently to Uncle Jerdon and to King. Then the barking arose ecstatically, receded in the distance, and finally was lost. I took up the essays and read for a while. My head was much better, and my soreness was slowly disappearing, but the constrained positions I had to hold to keep my rib from painning me made me too weary and impatient to put my mind on my book. I could hardly wait for Miss Fielding to return, and lay inert, watching the flies drift lazily through the sunshine that filled the room, hoping that Leah, at least, might come in to break my ennui. I welcomed even the hoarse, squeaky cry of King's pump, the occasional crowing of a rooster, the twittering of birds in the apple-tree, and the many little, homely sounds of country life. The fragrant perfume of the roses in the room was a blessed reminder of Miss Fielding's kindness.

In a half hour, I heard the dogs approaching, and she came into the room again, hatless, bringing a new breath of June with her. Her hair was blown to a silky veil through which her eyes shone and her rosy cheeks glowed, as she smiled at me over the footboard of my bed. Throwing off her little

white bolero, a saucy thing with black velvet collar and cuffs, she went to the mirror and gathered up the loose strands of her hair, tucking them in, here and there, with deft touches of her fingers, and adjusting them with dark tortoise-shell pins, until her little head, coiffed high, was as smooth as a cat's.

She came up to the bedside and was quick to notice by my nervous movements that I was suffering. Sitting down, she began to tell gaily of her walk over the hill, and, as she spoke, my aching was calmed as if she had laid a finger on the electric switch that controlled it. Then she suggested reading to me, and took up the volume of poems we had discussed.

Her voice was not quite intense enough for strong emotion; it had not the momentum, so to speak, to carry the lines along with the swing and rhythm necessary. It was too light for that, but it more than made up for it by its sympathetic tenderness and the delicacy of its inflection. Her tones lulled me, and I fell asleep.

In the afternoon she brought her mending, and we talked for a couple of hours or so, always keeping, as she expressed it, "on the island." What personalities we discussed, that is, had no reference to her history or her plans. She warned me off very cleverly several times when the talk approached her circumstances or even her moods and tastes.

Having confessed that she played a little on the piano and violin, I positively insisted upon my rights as an invalid to be amused. She rolled up her work and went to get her violin without excuses or apologies.

I waited with considerable anxiety to hear what and how she would play, not committing myself as to my own choice of composers. She began in her own room and through the opened doors I heard the strains of the "Prize Song" played with great verve and sentiment. I was delighted. She came, still playing, into my chamber, her sleeves rolled up (she said she could not play else), and accepted my compliments graciously and simply.

Then, walking up and down, absorbed, she gave me fragments of César Franck's sonata for the violin and piano. To watch her, supple, virile, rapt, to note her clever, accomplished technique, her passionate, free-armed command of the bow—I have seldom seen such a splendid attack or so sure and true a vibrato—was a joy beautifully associated with the clarity and subtle craftsmanship of the master.

So she ran on, alternating her renditions with scraps of talk that showed a keen musical sense and an appreciation of the radical, ultra-modern movement of the time. Next she burst into a vibrant, dramatic Polish folk-song that excited me like a fire. And finally, as a *tour de force*, her eyes dancing as she watched me over her shoulder, with some new, audacious devil in her smile, she enchanted me with a vivid piece most astonishingly enlivened with flights of technique—trills, brilliant chord passages, and runs with the upward and downward "staccato bow." Then she threw down her fiddle and came up to me, laughing.

That evening she had another delight for me, coming to my bedside and reading Villon and Verlaine in the original, translating the old French for me when I was perplexed by the *argot*. And for the picture, I need only add that Leah was of the circle, and made her own comments!

III

THERE was, next morning, a little dialogue much like that which I had overheard the day before, except that this time it was "stewed rose leaves with a small pot of sunshine," which Miss Fielding was fanciful enough to demand. I wondered what, after such a pleasantry, she did have; for I took it to be some joke between her and Leah, who, no doubt, translated the metaphor into something more substantial.

As I ate my breakfast, I could hear Miss Fielding singing in her room. She came in before I had finished my

egg and coffee, bringing an armful of new magazines. This time she was dressed in pongee and wore a short string of graduated white coral beads which was mimicked, when she smiled, by her little teeth.

"I've found out about you—quite by accident, though, Mr. Castle, really," she said gaily; and, opening one of the magazines, she tapped with her hand the picture of a country house my firm had just rather successfully completed. "So you're an architect! And I'm the first to get off the island, after all!"

"It doesn't matter, I suppose, so long as I stay on?" I asked.

"Oh, this doesn't by any means absolve you of your promise," she answered, examining the illustration carefully, still standing at the foot of the bed.

"You aren't really very much wiser, are you? There are architects and architects, you know."

"Yes," she said, apparently thinking of something else. "Quite as there are women and women," she added, turning over the pages idly.

"There's only one of *your* sort!" I exclaimed.

A queer smile passed and was repressed upon her lips, molding them to new curves. "Yes, only one of *me*."

"I don't exactly mean that, either," I went on. "The fact is, rather, that there is more than one of me. There's the architect and the man in me—and how many more! One is always astonishing the others. Aren't there, after all, several of you, Miss Fielding?"

She gave me a frightened glance, then tossed the magazine on the bed. It wasn't petulance; she seemed to be disturbed at the subject.

"Oh, I'm only a White Cat!" she said cryptically.

She seemed anything but that, to me.

"I'll tell you about it some time—perhaps," she added. "But not now."

She stood with her hands behind her back, raising herself on her toes, and changed the subject. "I'm awfully anxious to show you this house, now that I know you're an architect. It's

one of the oldest hereabout, and it was a wreck when I bought it. I've had it all done over inside, and I shall expect you to compliment me on my taste, for it's mainly my own ideas."

"What I've seen of it is charming—but a bit impersonal, perhaps."

"Oh, this is only the guest chamber. One doesn't inflict one's ideas on the transient visitor. Of course this is a bloodless, sexless place. You'll find personality enough in my room, I fancy. I hope you'll be able to get downstairs by day after tomorrow, and have a chance to look about at the place. I'm sure you'll love Meadows. I'm expecting the doctor down here this afternoon, and he'll probably be able to tell you how long you'll have to stay. I do hope you won't get well too fast, Mr. Castle."

"Trust me for that," I said. "I give you fair notice, I shall probably do some malingering. But I shall be glad to see the doctor, if only to make sure that I can impose on him."

My heart sank, nevertheless, at thought of his interruption of our idyll. I felt an illogical right to her by discovery, a certain franchise in her good graces that Fate itself had given me. The possible weakening of our alliance, however, was only the negative side of my annoyance. The positive aspect was that Dr. Copin seemed to be an old acquaintance, even a friend; for Miss Fielding had mentioned that she was going to walk over to the Harbor to meet him. It was possible, even—and the idea was poison—that she was in love with him. Well, I must needs wait and see him before I decided as to that chance.

I asked her to call her dogs again, and, seeing that it might amuse me, she offered to bring Nokomis, the best behaved, and matron of the kennel, up to see me. I accepted eagerly, and, from the window, she called her favorite.

Nokomis was one of the most beautiful collies I have ever seen, a tawny red, or sable, with white ruff, feet, and tail-point. Her head was finely shaped—not too dull for keenness, nor with too

much of the silly greyhound's tapering muzzle, as not a few flat-headed prize-winners, bred chiefly for color and coat, have. She had dark brown eyes set with that obliqueness that gives the breed its characteristic look of brightness, kindness and craft. Her small ears, as she entered, were semi-erect, giving her, as she stopped with her head slightly on one side, the sharp, doubtful expression of the fox. She came with her flag up, as if she were on exhibition before judges, marched to Miss Fielding and waited for orders.

"Isn't she a darling?" Miss Fielding said affectionately, rubbing her pet's neck. "You hasn't got flappy, saddle-bag ears and a high forehead and a velvet jacket, has you! I don't see no snipey nose! Hasn't she got an 'honest, sonsie, bawsint face,' Mr. Castle? Only it isn't 'bawsint.' And look at her 'gawcie tail, wi' upward curl! She has old Cockie herself for an ancestor, she has!"

Nokomis gravely stood on her hind legs with her forepaws on her mistress's skirt, panting—smiling, I might well say. Then, in obedience to a word and a gesture, she dropped and came over to me in so dignified and friendly a way that I fell promptly in love with her. Her outer coat was abundant, straight and stiff, the under one so thick and soft and furry that I could not find the skin. Her ruff was magnificent, her chest deep and strong. I was sure she would be a good worker; her wit had already been proved.

Miss Fielding was pleased with my appreciation, and consented to having Nokomis remain, and so, for the rest of the day, except for occasional inquisitive excursions, she lay on the floor beside my bed, thumping her tail and listening attentively whenever I looked down to speak to her.

Early in the afternoon Miss Fielding put on a fresh linen waist and corduroy skirt to set out for the station. Before she went she moved about the room, readjusting the flowers, drawing a shade or two which threatened to let the sun into my eyes, renewing my pitcher of water and so on, giving me in

five minutes a dozen evidences of her tact, thoughtfulness and consideration. Then, with a last warning to Nokomis to take good care of me, she went away, leaving the apartment depressingly empty.

Leah came in occasionally, however, to see if I was comfortable, but I could get little talk from her. She answered all my questions, looking at me with her melting, deep brown eyes, which were really not a little like those of old Nokomis, but volunteering no remark of her own. Between the two I managed to be fairly patient till, at about three o'clock, Miss Fielding returned with the doctor. I was aware of their approach for some time before they arrived by the joyous barking of the collies in front of the stable. At this Nokomis pricked up her ears, but was too well-bred to pay more attention. I had laughed at her for yawning wide with her wolf-like jaws, and she was sensitively on her dignity.

Dr. Copin was tall and thin, and younger than I had expected; and like most young doctors he attempted to make much of his years by a pointed, reddish beard. Nature had assisted him in this attempt, also, by removing enough of his hair to give him a shiny bald forehead almost to the crown of his head, and making him near-sighted enough to require strong eye-glasses. But all this could not induce me to think him more than twenty-seven or eight years of age. His eyes were of that china blue which, with red hair, is so apt to give a selfish, heartless expression, which went very well with his general bloodlessness. Except for those protruding blue eyes he might, with his yellowy-brown suit and his slender, long hands, have been an animated caricature, done in red chalk. Worst of all, to my mind, he was a Scotchman without an accent, and made puns.

He approached me with the jocose air affected by physicians, and looked me over with a grin. I could see, under his sparse beard, that he had a lizard chin, receding comically.

"Well, Mr. Castle," he said, "I ex-

pect you haven't been climbing any more trees with your machine, lately, have you? Feeling like Adam, after the creation of Eve, with that fourth rib of yours? Let me have a feel of it. Ah!"

He prodded me a little. "Well, we're doing so-so," he went on. "If you were a foot-ball player you'd be up in five minutes. How's the head? I suppose you haven't had quite such a big one since you put on long pants. You're not having many long pants these days, I fancy, with that cracked bone in your chest, are you?" And so on. I tried to smile, and did not succeed till I had caught sight of Miss Fielding's face frowning over his shoulder.

I was doing well, it seemed. It was nothing but a matter of time and patience. The worst of it was the shaking up, and for that, rest was all that was necessary.

I answered his pleasantries, asked him the news in town, and thanked him for what he had done, which, indeed, was not much. If I have given the impression that he was an ass, that was not at all how he impressed me. Though he persistently refused to talk sense, and turned everything I said into jest, I was ready enough to believe that he knew his business and stood well in the profession. I got little more than this, however, for he soon left for a talk—a professional one, I imagined, likely—with my hostess. This lasted till, after an early dinner, he left the house to be driven back to the station by Uncle Jerdon. Idle and bored as I was, while alone, I speculated upon his relations with Miss Fielding; but from what I had seen I could hardly regard him as a rival. Still, I knew well enough that one could not predicate from a man's appearance how women might like him. Dr. Copin would not be here in attendance, much less as a visitor, unless there was some value in him. He evidently knew the place well enough to have been at Mid-meadows often. It made me, for no particular reason that I could name, uncomfortable.

It was still and warm, the beginning of the hush of twilight, the birds' chattering quieted, when voices came plainly up to me through the open window beside my bed. Miss Fielding and the doctor were coming round a corner of the house on their way to the stable.

"I wish when she comes, next time, you'd have Leah let me know," I heard Dr. Copin say, earnestly.

"I won't promise to do that," was her reply.

"Why not?" he asked sharply.

"Why do you want to know?" she asked.

"You know well enough. You know how interested I am in her."

"I wish I *did*!"

This was the last I could make out, for they passed into the yard behind the house. I heard the carriage drive off, and soon after Miss Fielding's voice inside the house, calling for Leah to come down. I thought that I detected a strain of excitement, even of alarm in it.

A half-hour afterward she came into my room with a chess-board, and asked me if I played the game. I was delighted to try it with her, though I was poor enough at it, and she beat me easily.

She was quite as charming as ever, but as I studied my strategy, she had time in the silent pauses to fall into little moods of revery, letting the talk drop naturally. I was not too absorbed in my play to notice it, and once or twice I looked up from the board to see her face show a tragic expression, clearing under my surveillance, with what seemed to be a forced smile. The little lines near her eyes seemed to have deepened since morning, and two vertical ones came, at times, cutting upright clefts between her brows. Once or twice she put her hand to her head suddenly. Her listlessness accented her grace, but she seemed distinctly older.

After she had announced mate in three moves she awaited my capitulation. Then she put the board and men aside wearily.

"You'll find it desperately stupid here, I know, Mr. Castle. I wish we could be more amusing, but I'm a bit blue tonight."

"I only reproach myself for not being able to make you forget it," I said. "As for myself, I always feel like the hero of a fairy-tale when you're about."

She gave her head a quick, backward shake, as if to free her mind of some disturbing thought. "Oh, I told you I was the White Cat, you know!" she replied. "Can't you imagine how interesting it must be for us to have anyone here at all, and you most especially? Why, I feel that you are a friend, already. If it hadn't been so, I wouldn't have dared to confess so frankly that I'm depressed."

"What can I possibly say of you, then, who have proved yourself so friendly! I shall be glad when it comes my turn to give, and yours to receive."

"Oh, that time will come soon enough, I'm afraid," she said, folding her hands in her lap, and looking down at them.

"You make me quite long for it!"

"Oh, don't long for it!" she exclaimed, and then arose, nervously, to stand facing the lamp with a fixed, entranced gaze. "It will mean, perhaps, that I shall need all your sympathy, all your charity," she added, turning ever so slowly, to look down at me.

"I will give anything you ask——"

"And I shall ask nothing," she put in quickly. Again she threw her head back with that quick, freeing gesture. I saw what she meant. It would be put to my tact and intuition.

She held out her hand impulsively and put it into mine. It seemed very small and slight, and it was cold. Then, summoning a smile so rapid that it came and went in a flash, she bade me good night and left the room.

For fully an hour after that I heard her voice and Leah's in a steady, low conversation in the room across the hall. At nine, Leah came in to adjust the light and see that I wanted nothing. I fell into an uneasy sleep, waking at every cock-crow.

IV

THE next day was harsh and cloudy. There was a light fog in from the sea, enough to make it a little cold and depress my spirits. It was therefore with great impatience that I awaited the matutinal visit from my hostess. She was usually up betimes; today she slept late.

It had already become one of my chief diversions to listen for the little morning colloquy in the hall, but today I heard nothing till after eight o'clock, when Leah came upstairs, knocked on the opposite door, which was always half-open at night, and put her usual question.

Miss Fielding's voice came sharp and clear, a little querulous.

"Oh, I'll have bacon and eggs, I think; but wait awhile, Leah, I'm sleepy and I don't want to get up yet."

Leah closed my own door softly and went downstairs. I was disappointed. I hoped Miss Fielding was not in a bad humor, though that seemed impossible. When Leah came up with the tray and gave me a "good morning," I said:

"Leah, I wish you'd ask Miss Fielding if Nokomis can't come up into my room this morning, will you?"

She hesitated just long enough for me to notice that she was troubled; then she put down the tray, saying:

"Nokomis is a queer old dog, Mr. Castle, and I don't know that she'll come."

"Why, she was here all day yesterday and we had a beautiful time together!"

"I know." Leah turned to leave. "I'll speak about it, of course, but—well, these dogs have all sorts of fancies, and you can't always depend upon them. They will and they won't." She did not look at me as she answered, and went out immediately.

I felt that I had somehow blundered into an indiscretion, though what it was I couldn't possibly see. It made me exceedingly uncomfortable, for I would have done anything rather than take advantage of the kindness and hospitality with which I had been

treated. I remembered that I had not yet heard the dogs barking; that might possibly mean something, but it gave me no clue. I had to give it up and try to make amends as well as I might.

A little later I heard Miss Fielding's door slam, and her footsteps running down the stairs. That she had not come in to see me, even if for only a few words, did not decrease my annoyance. Shortly after came a chorus of barks, but I fancied that they were not of the same mood that I had noted before; there seemed to be something antagonistic in their protesting notes, as if some stranger had perhaps passed the house. I had got the idea that Midmeadows was a lonely place, though I had not yet seen the outside of the building, and no doubt the collies were distrustful of visitors. I waited expectantly to hear Miss Fielding call them, one by one, as she had before; but, if she did, I missed it.

For half an hour or more there was a steady pounding downstairs, and, when Leah came for my tray, I heard someone whistling, the least bit out of tune. Leah was silent and reserved. She asked how I had slept, and if I were better, and there the conversation ended.

Finally, at about eleven o'clock, Miss Fielding came in. I looked up eagerly.

She wore a stiffly-laundered shirt-waist, noticeably stained and soiled, though it had evidently been put on clean that morning. She wore no stock, and the neck was turned away in a V, carelessly, showing a little gold chain with a sapphire pendant, and the sleeves were rolled up above her dimpled elbows. She had a heavy walking-skirt and heavy mannish shoes whose soles projected a full half-inch beyond the uppers. Her hair, which, before, I had always seen exquisitely coiled high on her head, was done in a full pompadour, though now it fell in flat folds over her forehead and wisped out in the back of her neck.

She came up to my bedside and smiled frankly at me. I got a pronounced odor of Santal.

"Well, how are you today?" she said jovially. "Do you feel better?"

I said that I did, noticing that she wore three rings on her left hand. It was good to see her so full of life and energy.

"You certainly were a sight when you were brought in," she went on; "I was frightened to death. I never saw anyone unconscious before, and I thought you were dead, for sure. Isn't it lucky the doctor was here! I'm awfully sorry your auto was smashed up so, for I'd like to try it myself. I've been wanting one. Yours is a foreign make, isn't it? I've been looking it over. It's a water-cooled engine, I see. But I want a six-cylinder. I'm going to see if Uncle Jerdon and I can't patch it up so that it'll go."

"Fancy a girl caring about machinery!" I said, smiling at her enthusiasm. "You're the last person in the world I'd ever think would have any interest in it."

"Why?" she said, sitting on the edge of the bed, and turning down her sleeves, covering her round, strong arms.

"I thought that you were more of the artistic temperament."

"Oh, I like to use my hands," she said. She held one out, its fingers stiffly opened, then clinched her fist firmly. "They're stronger than they look. Try it!"

She took my hand in hers and gave me a grip as strong as any ordinary man's.

"That comes from your violin practice, I suppose," I remarked.

Her eyes were on mine and I saw that the pupils were dilated, and the irises so dark as almost to appear black. She did not answer me for a moment and then simply nodded vaguely and changed the subject.

"I've taken the clock apart more than once. The dining-room one, I mean. When the hands point to eight, it strikes four and it's half-past two, really. I have to tell time by an algebraic formula. I'm going to dissect it again and see if I can't get it right."

She laughed merrily, swinging her foot back and forth.

At that moment the collies began to bark again. She sprang up impatiently, and went to the window.

"Darn those dogs!" she complained, "don't they make a horrid racket, though! I can't keep them quiet." Then she raised the sash, leaned out and cried, "Hush up, there!"

Their answer was a chorus of indignation. She let down the window with a clatter, and walked to the mirror to rearrange her hair, using silver pins that shone conspicuously in her dark locks. Her skirt had sagged away from her belt, at the back, from the violence of her work, no doubt, and she reached to fix it, turning to smile at me coquettishly after she did so.

"Do you like my hair done high or low?" she asked.

"I like it best the way I first saw it, that night," I said. "It was done in a fillet, or a bandeau, wasn't it?"

"Why, no! It was pompadoured, wasn't it? Oh, yes—perhaps it was—I forgot—but it's so fine that I can't do anything with it."

Except for these little lapses of abstraction when she stared so puzzlingly at me, she was in high spirits. Her presence filled the room with electricity; she surcharged its atmosphere. She seemed more virile than ever, more full of life, so full that it actually seemed to splash over in all sorts of energetic gestures of her head and hands. As she stood, now, in the centre of the room, she made a quick dash at a fly that drifted past, caught it in her hand, smiled at her dexterity, and tossed it aside. She made passes and rapid motions with her arms, as if she were swinging a tennis racquet, and tapped her toes and heels in a little clog-dance as she walked. I saw that she was getting bored.

"Well," she said at last, "I must go to work. If there's anything you want Leah will do for you. You can call her. There's the bell. Don't hesitate to ring it. I'll be so glad when you can come downstairs and

see the place. It's a jolly old shack—you'll like it!"

She waved her hand jauntily and swung out of the room. I heard her run downstairs, and a little later the pounding and the whistling recommenced.

She seemed different today, but I imagined that perhaps it was only that she was feeling better in health and mind, though she had not appeared really ill before. She seemed younger than ever, too, the little lines in her face seemed to have been mostly ironed out. No doubt it was, as women say, "her day." Her beauty was more obvious; it was undeniable.

Yet something about her manner troubled me. I was distinctly disappointed; she seemed less subtle, less imaginative. She was no longer the princess of my fairy-tale; the spell had waned. But if her familiarity and naturalness upon further acquaintance were less romantic, they were more real, and had some of the actuality of prose. We could still be good friends, for I liked her immensely. Perhaps she had thought we had gone too far, sentimentally, and was trying to put our relations upon a firmer and more matter-of-fact basis. Perhaps, even, Dr. Copin's visit had, in some way, affected her, and she had considered that her *entente* with me was becoming dangerous. Well, it was certainly my place, as a stranger, thrust upon her hospitality, to take whatever cue she gave me, disappointing as that line of conduct should prove. For I had been stirred and awakened by her. I could not deny that to myself. And no doubt I had taken her altogether too seriously.

I saw no more of her till late in the afternoon, but, meanwhile, Leah made me a welcome visit. After luncheon she asked me quite modestly, if I would like her to read to me, or play chess. I chose the reading, wanting very much the opportunity of studying her. Her attention seemed, however, to be distracted; I was sure of it when, a little later, she excused herself to go downstairs. Then I noticed the bark-

ing of the dogs, high-pitched and excited.

She came back soon to finish her reading, and, that done, we fell to talking. As she sat, her dark brown face was outlined against the white woodwork of the alcove like a silhouette. Her white teeth shone.

I asked her about her education.

"I went to a school for colored women," she said, "fitting myself to be a teacher. But of course, it's hard for a colored girl to get a chance, except for her own race, and I didn't want to go South. Then I got this place with Miss Fielding."

"I can't imagine any situation more delightful," I said, watching her.

Her eyes burned, smothered in quickening tears, but her voice was calm enough. "It's lovely here. I don't mind the loneliness a bit. It's nothing to what I have endured in big cities."

She gave it to me simply, with no apparent bid for sympathy, but I knew enough of the pathetic isolation of the educated negro, cut off from any real mental communion with the blacks as well as from the whites, to interpret the repression of her manner. There was a tragedy in her words.

"Well," I said, "it strikes me that you're in luck to be here with such a companion as Miss Fielding. And she's as fortunate, too. I'm sure you get on beautifully. Still, how *she* can stand it, away off from everyone, I don't see quite so well."

"Do you think she's—unhappy?" Leah asked, after a pause.

"Certainly not today, at least. Yesterday I wouldn't have been quite so sure that she wasn't."

"Oh, she has her moods," Leah admitted. "I do my best to indulge them." She looked up at me. "So must you, too, Mr. Castle!" She held my eyes deliberately, as if expecting my promise.

"How could I be so ungrateful as not to, in the circumstances?"

"I mean—you see, she doesn't like to be questioned. I have to be very careful. She has her fancies, and often

seems inconsistent, even a bit eccentric. It may be her life here, alone. You know she sees so few people. You won't notice it?" Still her eyes appealed to me.

"I sha'n't at least show that I do."

She seemed dissatisfied.

"Except, perhaps, to you," I added, trying, as I had tried with Miss Fielding, to get to the bottom of her dread.

"Oh, not to me," she begged. "She's too fine for us to be discussing. I've said too much already, I'm afraid. I don't know why I did. Only——"

I said it for her. "Only, I am quartered on you, here, and you can't get rid of me. You have, in a way, a spy in camp. By an accident, I'm here, and you're at my mercy. Isn't that it? You don't, I mean, quite know what I am, and you'd like to be able to trust me, whatever happens." It was a jump in the dark, for me.

I could see her fingers working; she had clasped her hands.

"Oh, I hope I haven't given you the idea that anything is likely to happen," she said, anxiously. "If I have, I'm quite sorry I spoke. If you'll only take everything quite as a matter of course—that's all I mean—her moods, you know, and not think things—" she ended without attempting to be more lucid, for there was a sound of someone coming upstairs.

Miss Fielding came into the room, and her delicate right eyebrow rose at seeing Leah sitting there, doing nothing.

"Leah, go down and tie up the dogs; they're chasing all over the place!"

Her voice was crisp and peremptory.

Leah went away quietly; I got a swift glance of mute appeal at me as she left. Miss Fielding came to my side and looked down at me quizzically, her thumbs in her belt.

"Do you mind telling me your name?" she said. "It's rather awkward not to know, you know."

"Oh, Castle's my real name, right enough," I answered.

"Castle?" she repeated, and then, as if recollecting, "Of course, but I meant your first name." Her face cleared.

"Chester Castle," I enlarged. "A good name for an architect, isn't it?"

"An architect, really? Then I'll have to get you to help me on my little house. But you're too good looking for an architect," she laughed. "I thought they always wore pointed beards, like doctors."

"Oh, I'm not a Beaux-Arts man," I said, keeping up with her mood.

"Are you married?"

"No, I'm happy to say I'm not."

"So am I!" she laughed. "That is to say, I'm glad I'm not, and I'm glad you're not. My name is Joy. Isn't it silly? It doesn't fit me at all. I ought to have been called Edna."

"Very well, then, you shall be!" I volunteered.

She took it without surprise or annoyance. "Oh, I don't stand on ceremony. That's silly. If you're going to stay here for a week I shall have to call you Chester. Do you mind? It's an awful bore to have to say 'Mr. Castle' all the time."

"By all means. My mother and my friends call me 'Chet'."

"That's better still. Chet." She tried it audibly. "I rather like that."

"You're welcome to it," I laughed at her directness.

"But you haven't asked me any questions! I should think you'd be curious. Really, it isn't at all complimentary to have you so indifferent."

"Oh, I'm only keeping 'on the island'," I returned.

"Keeping—what?"

"Don't you remember—about staying 'on the island'? You know you asked me yourself to."

"Oh, yes—did I? I forgot." The puzzled look on her face had appeared again, but was driven away. "Well, there really isn't much to know about me. It's stupid enough here at Mid-meadows. It's my own place, you know. It used to belong to my grandfather. I've had it ever since he died. I suppose it's good for me here, for I'm ill a good part of the time. I'm up and I'm down. But when I'm up, I'm up pretty high, and when I'm down, I'm way down in the depths."

She had sat down in a chair and had crossed her legs, one over the other, wagging one foot and clapping her hands across her knees so tightly that the blood was driven from her white knuckles to the ends of her purple fingers. It is always an awkward pose; I have often wondered how a pretty girl could ever take it. Now, she drew her chair closer to the bedside and took my hand.

"Let me see your hand," she said, suddenly. "I'll read your palm, if you like."

She bent her head over it, drawing so near that her head was quite close to mine, so close that, had it not been for the perfume she used, I would have got the odor of her hair. When she turned to me, smiling, she seemed very near indeed, though none too near to me. She began her reading of the lines, holding my hand in both hers, pointing to the signs with one finger, trying the resistance of my thumb, squeezing the flesh to determine its firmness, kneading it and handling it in quite the professional manner. It took her some time. The opinions she gave me were not particularly affording, but they were rather cleverly put. She made a good deal of my "magnetism," saying that she could actually feel it. I was properly flattered. I could feel hers, easily enough.

Then she dropped my hand, arose and yawned as freely as had Nokomis herself.

"I'm starving!" she exclaimed. "I must see what's the matter with dinner. I'm sorry you can't come down, Chet. I hate to eat all alone."

"Why, doesn't Leah eat with you?" I asked, surprised.

"No, I can't quite go *that*!" she said, emphatically, as she made an irrelevant athletic gesture. "I have to draw the line somewhere, you know. I have Uncle Jerdon sometimes, though, just for the fun of seeing him eat. He's perfectly lovely! He holds his fork in the Kansas City style, this way—" She illustrated a familiar restaurant attitude, with the thumb and little finger of her left hand braced

under a paper-knife, the three middle fingers curled atop. "Then he always loads up his fork with his knife, a little piece of meat, and a little piece of potato, and a little dab of butter and a little swish of gravy and then—" She showed me how, pretending to toss it into her mouth, and wiped her lips with the back of her hand, in a way that made me laugh aloud. "You could hear him eat, way up here!"

"Golly! it makes me hungry to talk about it!" she added. "I'll see you later, Chet. Oh—I'll send you up some currant jelly. I made it myself; sure cure for the measles! Remember, you have to like it!" And she was off in a two-step.

I smiled to myself at her pantomime, after she was gone. Now I had misjudged her at first! She seemed commoner, but our friendship was, perhaps, more natural. She was no longer the wonderful, exotic, medieval princess in the tower, but she was a frank, wholesome creature, full of human charms and faults. I decided, by reason of that sane analysis, that I was improving in health. My bang on the head, no doubt, had made me unduly impressionable.

She did not keep her word in regard to coming in after dinner. Leah brought up my tray, as usual, and took it away, saying that she was unable to stay with me. She seemed abstracted and nervous, and I forbore to question her. I spent a dreary evening alone.

The pounding went on for two hours or more after dinner, and then Miss Fielding came upstairs to her room. She contented herself with putting her head through the doorway and calling out, "Good night, Chet!" and then I heard her door slam. There was no talk between the two women that I could hear.

V

"SLICED kisses, fried in tears," were the words I heard Miss Fielding reply to Leah's morning call, early the next day. I had waited long, for the day

was bright and I wakened at sunrise. The fanciful order put me immediately into a good humor, and I was intensely curious to see what the day would bring forth.

The collies were barking vociferously, joyously. Suddenly they stopped, and then, one by one, I heard them greet their mistress. It was very prettily done. Leah, coming in, found me smiling, and smiled back at me. Seeing me so much better, she offered timidly to help dress me, and I welcomed her proposal to bring me hot water and what was necessary for shaving. My own clothes had been sent down, so I prepared myself for my *châtelaine's* visit.

Joy came into my room with a sweet, low, "Good morning, Mr. Castle!" which threw me back not a little, after what had taken place on the yesterday. I was about to hazard some good-natured sarcasm, but the sight of her face inhibited it, and something of what Leah had said came back to me. I answered the greeting without comment, therefore, and waited for her to set the pace.

She was in an exquisitely fresh, simple organdy frock, and had on a garden hat and gauntleted garden gloves; her arms were filled with roses. Her brow wrinkled slightly as she noticed the fading blossoms which had been left in the vases.

"I'm afraid I neglected you yesterday," she said, as she set about emptying out the dejected roses and putting fresh ones in their places. As she came near to me, I noticed little dewy drops on her neatly coiled hair, where she had dashed it with violet water. There was no trace of any other scent, save that of the roses. She drew off her gloves and I saw that she wore no rings.

She sat down for a moment. I had observed before that not only could Miss Fielding be remarkably graceful in pose and in action, but that she could be as astonishingly *gauche* as well. Astonishingly, that is, for her—for one who *could* be so graceful. This, however, was decidedly one of her graceful

days, or rather, perhaps, as Leah had said, moods. Her lines melted and composed. There was positive elegance in the way she used her hands, gesticulating freely. It all went so well with her voice, so limpid and full of feeling.

"Isn't it a beautiful morning! What a shame it is that you can't get up. You must hurry and convalesce—just enough to be able to see the place, and not too much to have to go away. Perhaps you can get into a chair by tomorrow. Did you hear my doggies? I can recognize each of them by the voice, and you will be able to, too, if you only stay here long enough. Nokomis is the deepest-toned one. She's the oldest, you know, and the most dignified. Hiawatha is the little yappy one. He's a silly little pup!"

"I'm sorry Nokomis didn't want to come up to see me, yesterday," I said. "But I hope you'll pardon my taking the liberty of asking for her. I know you probably don't often allow them in the house."

"Why, of course Nokomis can come up; the idea! She'd love it. Would you like to see her now?" Then, with her eyes on mine, and noticing my bewildered look, no doubt, she added, with a queer expression, "Nokomis wasn't quite well yesterday. She is getting old, you know." She arose, restlessly. "Will you wait a moment, please? I want to speak to Leah for a minute," and went out.

Something had passed over her spirits, I couldn't tell what. It was like the shadow of a cloud sweeping rapidly across a sunny hillside. Whatever it was, it was gone when she returned.

She went directly to the window, threw up the sash, and called down, "Nokomis! Hi, Nokomis!" A bark responded.

"Come up here, old lady! Yes, come right up. Wipe your feet, please. Wipe your feet, Nokomis!"

The next thing there was a pattering of feet upon the stairs, and the bitch bounded into the room, her tail wagging. She ran up to Miss Fielding immediately for orders.

"Go and say 'how d'you do' to Mr. Castle, Nokomis," said Miss Fielding, pointing at me.

Nokomis dropped to the floor again, and with the dignity of a duchess walked over to where I lay, raised her beautiful eyes to mine, lifted a forepaw and laid it on the bed. I shook it and felt for the dog's neck.

"Now, Nokomis—" Miss Fielding began.

She was down on the instant, went to her mistress and stood waiting, her head on one side, her ears half erect, her tail low.

"Go and bring up Chevalier, please," was the command. Nokomis was off like an arrow, and presently there was a to-do in the yard. By this time I could recognize Nokomis's heavy note among the others. Then she and a tan and black collie came rollicking into the room. Both came immediately up to their mistress.

"Here's Chevalier, Mr. Castle. He's a pretty good show dog, isn't he? He hasn't got a fancy livery, but he's all right, except his tail's set on a bit too high, and there's a little feather to his hind legs below the hock."

Chevalier whined, and looked up at Miss Fielding. I was quite ready to believe the dog understood what she said.

"Oh, that's all right, Chev, you's a booful, good doggie, and I love you! Chevalier's strain harks back to the original Scott—he's quite a swell, in his way, and has got blue ribbons. But they all want tri-colored calico dogs, now. Go over and pay your respects, Chevalier, please!"

The dog came up to me, was patted, and left with Nokomis, who was next instructed to return with John O'Groats, a big dog, almost wholly black, with a rather blunter muzzle than the others.

"John's got pretty good blood, too, and his mother was from the Lothian Hills, like Norval—no, that was the Grampians. A little hollow-backed, and his forelegs aren't quite straight, but Jack's a good dog, aren't you, Jack? A fine worker, too."

Jack was certainly listening to every

word attentively, whether he understood or not. After he had gone, Nokomis brought up Minnehaha, one of her own youngsters, pure white.

"Poor little Minnie," said Miss Fielding, "she's got yellow eyes and a thin coat, but I love her just as much!" Taking the forepaws she held her own face tantalizingly near to the dog's tongue. "Just as much, I do. Now go over to Mr. Castle, miss!"

Last of all came Hiawatha, a frenzied, wriggling, capering puppy, sable-and-white like his mother, yelping, crouching, bounding, hysterical with joy. Miss Fielding and I fell to laughing at his antics, but Hiawatha was too young to care. He was up on top of my bed in half a minute, and stifling me with his eagerness, lapping my face and hands, growling, snarling, biting, scratching all at once. When this frisky, capering bunch of enthusiasm had departed, quite out of his head with the excitement of the visit, Miss Fielding talked dog for ten minutes. She had not forgotten, however, to compliment her pets with a lump of sugar apiece, filched from my tray and dropped from the window with strict precedence.

"Oh," I said, looking at her with admiration, "I do think your own name is the best! It's so like you."

"What d'you mean?" she asked, coming up to me.

"Why—Joy." I replied.

"Of course it is! Isn't it fun to have a name like that? One has quite to live up to it, though. It inspires me, sometimes, when I'm blue."

"Yes; it has distinction. I don't see why you ever should prefer Edna."

"Oh, Edna—" she said, seriously. She waited a moment, to shake from her skirt the sand the dogs' paws had left. "Well, I do like Edna, sometimes. It depends upon my mood, I suppose. You know I told you I had moods. Don't try to reconcile me, I know I'm inconsistent. But I'm a woman," she added, looking up more brightly, "and I suppose I have that right."

"I haven't decided whether you're a

woman or not," I returned. "Sometimes I have thought you were a princess in disguise."

"Oh, that's nice of you! But why?"

"You're so mysterious, so whimsical, so alone, so romantic."

"Take care!" she warned. "You aren't trying to swim off the island, are you?"

I opened my eyes at this.

"You still hold me to my promise—after yesterday?"

"Why not?" she said, a little blankly.

"Why, I thought we were well off the island—at least you were. I thought that you had given up the game."

"Why?" she asked, looking at me directly in seeming surprise. "I think you must have mistaken my meaning."

I couldn't quite get it. "You asked me all sorts of questions, anyway, you know," I ventured.

Her eyes begged for mercy. "I'm sorry if I was impertinent—"

"Oh, I don't mean that, of course. You couldn't be. You had a perfect right to ask, of course."

"Can't I row back in a boat, please?" she pouted whimsically. "Don't give it up yet. Not till I give you specific leave of absence. I suppose I'm spoiled. I want my cake to keep and eat, too."

I was a little relieved at her recognition of her own inconsistency, though I felt a queer hiatus somewhere. It was as if, mentally, I had tried to go up a step where there was none. But I let the subject drop. She took up the books on the stand and began to look them over.

"Don't you think Leah reads beautifully?" she asked.

"It's charming to hear her, but, if you don't mind, I prefer to hear you."

She took all my compliments so graciously, without either embarrassed denial or vanity, that I loved to watch her when I tried a gallantry. Now she only nodded to me, sweepingly, with mock deference, and went on, "Leah and I disagree somewhat. I have more manner, perhaps, and less rhythm. We read a good deal together. I think

she sees Browning much more clearly than I. Perhaps I feel him more keenly."

"She's a remarkable girl—I was going to add 'for a negress,' but I needn't qualify it."

"Oh, no! You don't *know* how fine she is." Seating herself she added, as if to herself, in a sort of sigh, "What that girl has done for me!"

"I am sure that she would say just that of you," I remarked.

"Oh, I try her a good deal, sometimes. Her mother was my nurse. When I sent for Leah, I didn't expect to get anything more than, perhaps, some of the hereditary devotion darkies have, even if I got that. But I got a friend. You can't trust her too far, Mr. Castle, believe me! She's pure gold."

It happened that, as she spoke, Leah herself came into the room with letters for me. Miss Fielding took the girl's hand and pressed it against her own cheek affectionately. As she did so, I noticed a peculiar scar—a livid "U"-shaped mark on Leah's wrist. It was the sort of scar that might be left from a wound by a carving tool—one of the narrower gouges.

"Was I very horrid yesterday, Leah?" Miss Fielding asked, looking up into the fine brown face.

"Oh, *please*, Miss Joy!" Leah begged uneasily.

"Of course *you* understand, Leah; I only want Mr. Castle to know I'm sorry," Miss Fielding insisted.

"I need only to look at you to be sure you're sorry, and to look at Leah to be sure that there's no need of it," I declared. "At any rate, there's no need of my understanding. In fact that's just what I thought you *didn't* want me to do. Isn't it?"

Leah looked quickly from me to Miss Fielding, and back again.

"Yes, I suppose it is," Miss Fielding said, slowly, thoughtfully. "Let's get back on the island again. I'm sure it's big enough for us."

We stayed, therefore, "on the island" all that afternoon, touching, that is, but lightly on personal topics.

But though we did not go wide, we went deep enough to make the talk hold us absorbed for an hour at a time. In quite another way, I think, we went far, as well. Miss Fielding was a stimulating conversationalist. She made me feel at my best. She had that happy way of meeting me on my ground every little while, then going on, and giving me a hand up to hers, and so, by a series of alternate agreements and divergencies, keeping the discussion both sympathetic and various. In most of this quick give-and-take Leah was a passive listener unless specially appealed to, at which times she often expressed herself so succinctly and sapiently that Miss Fielding and I looked at her, and then at each other with a comic expression of admiration and depreciation of our own powers.

With such conversation the day went fast. In the afternoon Miss Fielding read to me, and, in the evening I spent two or three hours in passive delight listening to her violin.

My pain had almost subsided, now, and I looked forward with something more poignant than regret at being able to be up and about, knowing that would mean the beginning of the end of our companionship.

VI

THE next morning Miss Fielding slept late, and her breakfast order was, as it had been two days before, prosaic. Then, also, she had slept late. This coincidence struck me and gave me a presentiment. I looked curiously for the first sight of her to confirm or destroy a theory that I had been incubating during my long night hours alone. The fact that, as I ate my breakfast, I could hear her whistling in her room helped along my hypothesis. So did Leah's apparent mental detachment.

Miss Fielding romped into my room at about half-past nine, and with a laugh and a "Good morning, Chet!" pirouetted up to my bed. My theory

instantly gained plausibility. Her manner was what I had anticipated. Her dress, also, was significant.

She had on a fussy sort of silk waist, inappropriate, I thought, with her cloth walking-skirt. Her hair was elaborately "Marcelled" and she wore bangles that clinked on her wrists; there was the same odor of Santal that I had previously noticed. What was most suggestive was that this get-up was apparently meant to impress me. At least, that was how I interpreted her coquettish smile. I wouldn't care to say that she showed actual poor taste—it was only, I thought, poor taste for *her*. She needed such adjuncts of fashion so little!

"See here," she said, tossing her head, and pointing at me dramatically, "you're getting altogether too lazy! I think that you've been in bed long enough. I'm going to get you downstairs today. The doctor said three or four days in bed would do, and now it's five. How do you feel?" She shook the post of my bed with mock ferocity as if to expend some surplus energy. There seemed to be an extra ounce of blood in her this morning.

"Oh, I'm game!" I replied, "nothing would suit me better."

"I'll get the library ready, then; Leah and Uncle Jerdon will help you down. Then you can watch me work, if you don't mind. I'm trying to finish my *coffret*." She felt thoughtfully of her biceps. "I'll get quite a muscle before I'm through. I will have driven about twelve hundred nails by the time it's done."

She walked to the door, swinging her arms, and called "Leah! Come up here! Quick!"

Leah appeared, out of breath, as if, for the moment, she had expected that an accident had happened. She gave a quick, apprehensive look about.

"Leah, we're going to get Mr. Castle downstairs today. Is Uncle Jerdon about?"

"Do you think Mr. Castle is well enough to be moved, yet?" Leah ventured.

"Didn't I say he was going down-

stairs?" Miss Fielding repeated impatiently. "I think we can decide that question. You do as I say. Go and get Uncle Jerdon, and be quick about it, too!"

"She's spoiled. She thinks she runs this house," Miss Fielding complained to me, when Leah had left.

I said nothing, watching her closely. My theory was now pretty well substantiated. I could not pass this scene off as merely one of the "moods" that she and Leah had both mentioned. There was something definitely wrong with Miss Fielding today—something more than a mere whim of temper. There had been something wrong two days before, when she had acted similarly. She was distinctly not herself, if her normal self was the graceful, delicate, tactful creature who had first charmed me.

It was not only her mood or her taste in costume that seemed different. It was something not quite describable which seemed to permeate her whole personality. She had taken a chair and sat with her right arm cast up over the back. The angle of her raised elbow threw her into a distinctly awkward position. Her gestures, too, were characteristic of this mysterious difference. When they were not distinctly imitative, as in mimicking Uncle Jerdon's table manners, they were irrelevant, mere spasmodic exhibitions of activity—as when she caught the fly, or swung her arms with active tennis-like gestures. This spontaneous irrelevancy she showed now in the way she doubled her fists and brought them athletically to her shoulders, as she talked or, raising her foot a little, made circles with her toe, showing the slenderness and suppleness of her ankle. I don't say that all this ebullition of high spirits wasn't, in its way, charming. It was. But it was different from the way she had acted yesterday! Perhaps I can best describe it by saying that she seemed quite ten years younger.

She sprang up and, apropos of nothing at all, proceeded to dance or hop sidewise across the room and back

hilariously, in sheer excess of vigor. It was what she called "galumphing," and, from time to time, during the day, usually at the end of some little over-serious conversation, she repeated the performance, to my great amusement and delight. It was the absurdly meaningless gamboling of a kid, but it was so delicious in its inconsequence that every time it provoked my laughter.

While we were talking nonsense there, Leah came up with Uncle Jerdon. Uncle Jerdon was a distinctly New England type—the chin-bearded, straw-chewing farmer, quaintly original, confident, droll. He was well on in years, a dried-up, wrinkled, toothless bachelor with sparse, straw-colored hair, long in the neck, and twinkling blue eyes full of good nature. He wore overalls and reeked of the stable.

Miss Fielding introduced him, and I shook his skinny hand.

"Wall," he drawled, "thinkin' about movin', be ye? I guess Leah an' me'll make a pretty good elevator. I'll help ye get dressed, fust-off, an' then we'll take ye up tenderly, lift ye with care."

The two women left while I got my clothes on. It felt good to leave the bed.

"We been a-tinkerin' on that air machine o' yourn, but it's a leetle bit too much for us, I guess," Uncle Jerdon said. "Ye'll have to send deown a man, I expect. I wouldn't ride in one o' them pesky things for all the gold of Ophir, no sirree, bob! When I want to go to ride I want to see the back of a good hoss, an' then I know I'll get home by sun-deown."

He monologued away thus as he helped me into my clothes, and, when I had finished, called to Leah.

She came in, and I took an arm of each, though I scarcely needed their help. We descended a narrow paneled stairway slowly but safely, without causing me any pain, and turned into a door on the left-hand side of the lower hall. There I found a Morris chair ready for me, drawn up before

a wide brick fireplace where an oak log was burning. Uncle Jerdon left me with a wink at seeing Leah placing a foot-stool for me and drawing up a tabourette on which were cigars and cigarettes. There ensconced, I looked about with interest.

It was a large room, finished all in paneled unvarnished redwood, most beautiful in color—a lighter red than mahogany, with more softness and bloom. Two sides were lined with book-cases, except for the chimney-breast; another was almost filled with a broad bow-window of leaded glass with a deep seat covered with corduroy cushions. There was a narrow shelf supported by carved brackets part way up, and a cornice above that. Between the adzed beams of the ceiling were panels of old Spanish leather, lacquered and stamped. The whole effect was a modified French Renaissance worked out with many charming originalities of detail. The pilasters, and the elaborate mantel with its ornamented mouldings and graceful consoles showed handicraft of an interesting sort. They seemed to have been carved by some artistic amateur, being boldly cut without the machine-like regularity of the professional. There was, besides the unusualness of the wood, much to interest me as an architect.

The library was well filled without appearing crowded, and everything, furniture and appointments, betokened, as had my chamber, not only taste, but luxury. It was evident that Miss Fielding was very well off, and knew how to use her money. It was as evident that she had a strong personality, for there were details that were unique. A large prism of rock-crystal, for instance, carelessly resting in the sunshine upon the dull-brown cushions of the window-seat, threw a prismatic spot of splendor upon the ceiling. It was like a gorgeous butterfly pinned to the leather. There was a silver cage of Japanese waltzing mice upon the mantel, little grotesque, pied creatures that spun wheels, washed their necks with their paws and nibbled

at rice. The books too, were arranged upon the shelves apparently not as regards subjects, but rather on account of their bindings, giving masses of color, green and red and brown and black and white.

But it had all been indubitably so well lived in, its properties all ministered so to one's comfort, and the tones were all so restful and admirably composed, that I could imagine no more charming environment for a rainy day with Miss Fielding.

A great library table stood in the centre of the apartment, one end of which was covered with magazines—everything from "The Journal of Abnormal Psychology" to the "Pink 'Un." Upon the other end, resting on a hide of ooze leather, were scattered tools and materials, and the unfinished chest upon which Miss Fielding had been working. This was covered with young calfskin, the soft hair still on, a pretty brindled tan and white, and it was bound on the edges with brass strips. These were fastened in place by close rows of brass-headed nails, which accounted for the pounding I had heard. I was admiring the workmanlike way in which the chest was made, when Miss Fielding came in.

"What d'you think of my 'bossy coffret'?" she said. "Isn't it going to be a beauty? My own invention. Don't steal the scheme, and I'll show you how."

She stood up to the table, and taking one of the brass strips, laid off the divisions and punched holes for the nails, and then hammered it on. She kept up, meanwhile, a running fire of persiflage. Occasionally she would stop, to toss her hammer into the air and catch it nimbly by the handle as it fell.

"I thought you were going to call me Edna," she said, after a while, pausing, with some nails in her mouth, to look over at me. "Don't you like the name?"

"I thought *you* didn't like it," I said, my eyes turning from her brisk, clever hands, to her absorbed face. A wave passed over it as I looked—

that baffled expression I had noticed before.

"Did I say so?" Her hammer was poised in mid-air.

"Why, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose so. It doesn't matter. Nicknames seldom stick, anyway." She placed a nail in the hole.

"Oh, I don't object to 'Chet' at all."

"'Chet' goes, then." She drove in her nail with a frown.

Before I had thought of my promise, I said: "It's funny you don't remember it!"

Bang, bang-bang. Another nail went in, driven viciously.

I fully expected that she would speak of "the island" again, but she didn't. Instead, she dropped her tools, and said:

"I'm building a house, too!"

"Where?" I asked.

She laughed and "galumphed" across the room and back again without looking at me, before she answered. Then she stopped at the door and called up for Leah to bring down her bunch of keys. When these had come, she kneeled in front of the window-seat and unlocked a cupboard below it. From this, she brought out a little model house, built of pasteboard, perfect in all its details.

It had windows of mica, behind which were white sashes and lace-paper curtains. The house, an old-fashioned New England homestead, was set out in a little yard of green velvet divided by paths of sand paper, and set out with toy trees. A child would have loved it. A fairy would have appropriated it at first sight. As an architect, the model made a great appeal to me. It had charm and atmosphere, good massing, good proportions, detail and color. I complimented her enthusiastically.

She was poking about the little front porch and the platform in the rear, where a microscopic ash-barrel stood, adjusting the doors and blinds with her slender forefinger, when she frowned and said:

"Why, someone's broken that tree in front! Leah, have you been touch-

ing this house? There's a blind gone, too!"

"No, Miss Joy, I haven't touched it!" Leah protested.

Miss Fielding stamped her foot. "You *must* have! It was all right when I left it here last. Who could have done it, if you didn't?"

Leah grew more and more uneasy, but stood her ground. "Indeed, I didn't touch it, Miss Joy!" she repeated.

"You're all the time meddling with my things. I've caught you at it before. You know altogether too much. Well, go back to your work now!"

Leah left in silence, and Miss Fielding put back the house and locked it up. A hard look came into her face that I had not seen before.

Her temper passed off almost as soon as it had risen, and she was as gay as before. So until luncheon time, she worked while I looked over the magazines and talked with her.

We sat, at luncheon, on opposite sides of the table in a long and rather narrow room without windows, lighted by a huge skylight. The walls of this strange place were covered with an old-fashioned imitation tapestry paper whose fanciful patterns consisted of consecutive scenes from "The Lady of the Lake." Everything about the table was heavy, spotless, valuable and old, from the yellow linen to the hand-made forks and spoons. We were waited upon by King, a smiling, round-faced Chinaman with a cue coiled upon top of his head, wearing a snowy white uniform. He moved like a ghost in and out. Leah and Uncle Jerdon I noticed, when the door was opened, eating at a table in the kitchen.

Miss Fielding and I spent the afternoon together in the library. She worked and talked alternately; it appeared that she could not do both at once, and always had to stop with her tool in hand when she spoke to me, like a child. Occasionally she would come over to my chair and seat herself familiarly upon the arm as she joked with me. Then she would spring up, to "galumph" up and down the room, sidewise, running her hand mischiev-

ously through my hair as she passed. I took no notice of the liberty, but I was a little surprised at it. It began to rain that afternoon and by five o'clock it was so dark that Leah was had in to light the candles in the silver sconces on the walls. Miss Fielding's spirits were gradually tamed. I asked her to play the violin for me, but she refused moodily without excuses.

Our talk fell to books, and I went back to Leah's surprising love for Browning.

"Oh, Leah knows more than is good for her," Miss Fielding said. She was on the window-seat, looking out at the steadily falling rain, her feet curled up under her. "Leah's so educated that she's unhappy; it's a great mistake, that. I can't seem to keep her in her place any more. But really, I don't see any poetry in Browning, do you?"

"Why!" I said, "I thought you were fond of Browning—that you 'felt' him, even if you didn't 'see' him. Didn't Leah do that for you?"

"Leah! Fancy! What d'you mean by 'seeing' and 'feeling' him, anyway?" She turned to me with her chin resting on the curled back of her hand.

"They're your own words," I answered, testily, perhaps.

She opened her eyes wider. "Oh, I mean what do *you* mean?"

I didn't answer.

"If I said it," she continued, slowly, as if searching for a plausible excuse, and then giving it up, "I suppose I was trying to impress you. You mustn't expect me to be consistent *all* the time."

"I'll never expect you to be again," I said, now fairly nettled.

She came right over to me, and took my hand, sitting on the arm of my chair. "Oh, Chet," she pleaded, "don't mind me. I'm a fool, and I know it. I know you don't approve of me any more, but I can't stand it to have you cross with me. I can't bluff you any longer, so I might as well tell you. The fact is, my memory is bad. It's really a disease. Amnesia is the name of it. Now do you see? It isn't my fault, is it? I can't depend upon myself for anything. Some-

times I absolutely forget all about a thing that happened only yesterday. I have great blank spaces in my life when I don't know what has happened. It's perfectly awful! Did you ever hear of anyone like that?"

"Do you really mean to tell me that you forget what you said to me about Browning?" I asked her, taking her hand, for I was filled with a sudden pity.

"Yes, Chet, sure I do!" She rolled my seal ring between her fingers as she looked down.

"And about preferring 'Joy' to 'Edna'?"

"Oh, did I say that, too? Yes, I forget."

"It doesn't seem possible!" I exclaimed. Then, tentatively, almost fearfully, for it seemed the crux: "And about 'the island'?" I held my breath.

"What 'island'?"

I dropped her hand. It was too much for me. "Oh, never mind." I sighed. "I'm very sorry. But I don't quite see, yet. Has this anything to do with your refusal to play for me?"

She arose, now, and tossed her head back, with that shake I had noticed before. The gesture seemed to be the only link between her two moods, and, for a moment, she seemed to be again the melancholy princess. But the phase passed instantly, and she grew petulant.

"I don't know how to play well enough. It bores me."

I refused to let her off, however.

"Then how about playing chess?"

She shrugged her shoulders and said, "Oh, I haven't got the kind of a brain for chess."

"But it's incredible!" I cried.

"How do you get along? How do you account for things? Do you mean to tell me that yesterday, for instance, you can't remember? Not even what you did?"

She was growing more and more impatient. "No—sometimes I don't know how much time I've lost at all. You see, it's like being asleep, that's all.

That's what Dr. Copin comes down here for."

"Oh, I see!" I exclaimed.

"That, and other things—" she hinted, coquettishly.

"Ah?" I raised my eyebrows.

"Among the other things, I suppose, is the fact that you're perfectly charming."

"Oh, I don't think he quite ignores that," she laughed, and then, her mood changing, as if it had been pent up by such serious discussion and sought relief, she bounded away and galumphed madly up and down the room, waving her hands.

After dinner we spent the evening by the fire. She had put on a low-necked gown of black net over silver tissue, in which she looked more like a princess than ever. But it was only the costume now; her demeanor was far from royal. She snuggled herself into a bunch on the fur rug by the hearth, disclosing one slender ankle and a stocking of snaky silver silk. Had she not been so slender and *petite*, I might almost say she sprawled, though her hoydenish abandon was not quite immodest. She had her coffee and a cigarette or two, chattering a steady stream meanwhile. I could get no more about her malady out of her; the subject seemed to annoy her. But I could not get it out of my mind. I went back over what had passed, and found that her explanation accounted for much that had baffled me. Still, it did not account for everything. It did not account, for instance, for the way she now treated me.

She got up, after a while, as if annoyed at my abstraction, and began to roam up and down the room.

"I guess coffee makes me a little drunk," she remarked. I did not quite get the point of this till she stopped behind my chair and ran her fingers through my hair carelessly.

"What a jolly wig you've got, Chet! Your hair is almost as fine as mine."

The familiarity made me, I confess, somewhat uncomfortable. I was neither a prig nor a prude, but her talk of the afternoon had wrought on

me. I couldn't quite see my way. I didn't at all like, for instance, what she had said about Dr. Copin's coming down—for more than one reason. Perhaps it was this, more than any instinctive dislike of her unconventionality, that put me on my guard with her, and made me appear to ignore what, I acknowledge, in other circumstances I might have been tempted to take advantage of. For she was distinctly making up to me, I could see that very plainly. She did like me. So I was unchivalrous enough, or chivalrous enough, if you like, to try to keep her at arm's length, though that is putting it rather too strongly.

It was not so easy, though, that night, with the seclusion, the comfortable open fire, the soft lights, and the rain outside. The situation was romantic; I was alone with a pretty girl, prettily gowned, and quite frankly desirous of a little more intimate companionship than I vouchsafed. Somehow I was rather proud of myself, having at that time, after all, such hazy reasons for forbearance. I scarcely need to add to this that I was becoming fond of Miss Fielding, in spite of the puzzling mystery about her. She was alluring in any mood. My intuitions, however, were all for caution.

With such distractions the hours flew fast. The candles burned low and flickered till we talked only by the light of the fire. She told me a good deal of her life as a girl—there were no lapses of memory at that time—how she had been left an orphan and had always been more or less of a hermit thereafter. Part of the time she played with my hand, quite as a child might. Part of the time she sat, her chin at her knees, gazing into the dying flames in the fire-place. Then she would smile, look up suddenly, and quote some nonsense-rhyme, or make fun of my discretion. Her body was never quite still; she was nervous and restless. If nothing else about her moved, her toe would be describing little circles on the rug.

She and Leah helped me upstairs at

ten o'clock. Miss Fielding flung me a cheery "Good night, Chet!" and went into her room alone.

A few minutes after, I heard a soft tapping at my door. Leah was there with a jug of milk and some biscuits.

"I thought you might like something to eat, perhaps, before you went to bed," she said. "Miss Joy forgot to speak of it."

"Thank you, Leah," I said, taking the little tray. I was about to close the door when she gave me a look that delayed me.

"Did you want anything else?" I asked.

"Do you mind if I speak to you for a minute?" she asked. She stopped and listened intently for a moment.

"Leah, where in the world are you?" Miss Fielding called, impatiently.

Leah spoke in an undertone to me. "Please wait. I'll be in as soon as I can." Then she went into Miss Fielding's room.

I left my door ajar and sat down by the window. The rain had ceased, and a full moon was breaking through masses of drifting cumulus clouds over the top of the hill behind the house. I could hear the dogs snapping and growling occasionally in their sleep, and below, in his little box of a room off the library, Uncle Jerdon's deep snoring. I must have been there for fifteen minutes before Leah reappeared with her candle. She shut the door noiselessly and came softly up to my side.

"Mr. Castle, how are you feeling, now?" she asked.

"Oh, I'm afraid I'm getting well," I said, smiling. "Why? Do you think I ought to be leaving?" I asked the question jocosely, but she took it up with seriousness.

"I'm really afraid you'd better, Mr. Castle." She looked me square in the eyes. Her own shone very wide and deep.

"I don't wish to hurry you," she went on, "but it will be much better for you to leave as soon as you can. You'll forgive me for mentioning it, won't you? I hope that you won't

think that I don't realize my position; but—I can only say that I am doing what I think is best. If I weren't so sure that you are a gentleman, and a friend of Miss Joy's, I'd never dare mention it. But, oh, there'll be trouble if you stay, and heaven knows we've had trouble enough." Her voice grew lower at the end of her sentence, and then she breathed, poignantly, "Oh, *please* go!"

I felt a pang of self-reproach and a great pity for her. "Oh, I'll go!" I reassured her. "I understand. Or, at least, if I don't quite understand, I'm sure you're quite right. I think I can get away tomorrow morning, if you'll get the carriage for me."

"I'll attend to that. Uncle Jerdon can drive you to the station. And don't, please, mention to Miss Joy that I spoke to you about it. She may ask you to stay—she likes you, really; but she doesn't know what I know, and I don't dare tell her." She clasped her hands and pressed them closely to her breast in the intensity of her feeling, as she added, "You must help me, Mr. Castle! I have nobody else to turn to."

"Are you sure that I can't help you by staying here?" I asked. "I'll do anything you suggest. Why can't you trust me? I dread to think of your having to fight it out alone, whatever it is."

"Oh, I don't dare to tell—I have no right to tell," she moaned, turning half away, looking down. "Indeed, I wish I might. It's breaking my heart." She turned to me again with a desperate glance. "We'll get on, somehow."

"The doctor will help you, won't he? Surely you can trust him?"

She gave me a frightened look, and her white teeth shone through her parted lips, gleaming in contrast to her fine dark face. Then her eyes strayed again, and she said, slowly, "Do you think he can be trusted?"

"Why not?" I replied, watching her sharply. "How, at any rate, can I tell, after having seen him only once?"

She gave a quick indrawn sigh. "Oh, once was enough for *me*!"

"You mean—that you *don't* trust him?" I exclaimed in surprise.

"I mean I'm not sure that I do." She was speaking slowly, now, choosing her words with an effort. "That's quite as bad, isn't it? For I don't know what to do about him. I am afraid that I may make things worse, perhaps."

"You're sure that you can't tell me?"

"Oh, I daren't! If I were only sure, I might, but even then it would be hard." Her voice was plaintive, and yet her accent was decisive.

There was a pause in which I thought of many things. As I waited, uncertain, my eyes stayed on the fine, erect colored girl before me, so passionately loyal to her mistress, so fine and sensitive to the anomalous part she was playing. Though her resolution had in no way broken down, I could see how she was wrought upon, how difficult a position was hers, in that strange house.

"Well," I said, finally, "there's of course nothing for me to do, then, but to leave. Miss Fielding has told me explicitly that your judgment can be depended upon. I have no right here, of course; I'm an interloper—"

She put a dark, well-shaped hand on my arm, in timid reproach.

"Yet, I hope you can trust me," I added, not hesitating to clasp that hand in friendship and confidence.

She took it away quickly, but looked at me with her soul in her dark eyes. "Oh, I'm sure of you!" she said, simply.

"You make it very hard for me to go," I ventured.

"I shall think of you," she replied. "I shall long for your strength and judgment. I must think it over, more, and try to decide on a line of action. It may be—I won't promise—that I shall send for you to come down."

"I'll come at a moment's notice!" I exclaimed. "Oh, do let me help in some way!"

"Would you?" She clasped her hands to her breast again, and sighed, as if I had really helped her by my promise. Then, "I'm glad to be able

to know that. Miss Joy likes you. I think you have a rare sympathy for her condition. It's a relief. Then we'll leave it that way. So you'll leave?"

"Tomorrow morning," I answered.

VII

WE had met, next morning, in the library, for I could move alone, now, and had gone down early. My hostess, dressed in white duck, was in her most exquisitely graceful mood, quite the delicate, refined, intense woman I had first known.

"Do you really think that it's safe for you to leave today?" she asked, when I had announced my intention to her. "I am afraid we shall miss you very much, Mr. Castle. I feel quite as if I had made a friend."

"If you do, it more than repays me for my accident, Miss Fielding. It only remains for you to prove it by permitting me to do something for you."

She smiled quickly. "Stay here a while longer, then!"

"Ah, you know how glad I'd be to! But I really must get back. I've imposed on your hospitality unconscionably, already."

"Oh, well," she turned to the window, "if you're going to pay me the conventional compliments, we won't press it."

"If you knew what an immensely unwarranted interest I've begun to take in you, you'd spare me," I replied.

She held out her hand to me, her graceful fingers slightly divergent, exquisitely posed. "Thank you for your gallantry," she said. "You have come out of the dark, literally dumped here, you know, and it has been wonderful that we have understood each other as well as we have." She stayed my interruption, with a wave of her hand. "Oh, I understand you, I think, at least well enough to be sure of you. But, let's be frank—you don't *quite* understand me, yet. You don't quite approve of me. Nevertheless, you like

me, and we can be friends. It may indeed be that I shall put you, some time, to the test, and give you the chance of proving it. Until that time comes you'll have to stay on the island, Mr. Castle, I'm afraid."

I saw by these words that she must have forgotten her revelations of the night before. It didn't seem quite fair not to let her know. So, risking her displeasure, I came out with it.

"May I venture to remind you of what you said last night?"

She looked hard at me. "What did I say? What do you mean? About what? We talked of so many things, you know." She was embarrassed, on the defense, watching eagerly my first word of enlightenment.

"About your memory," I prompted.

"My memory? I don't quite recall—" Her lips were parted and her fists closed a little as she waited.

"About your having amnesia, you know."

Her hand went to her heart.

"I only mention it," I said, "because I don't want to take advantage of any ignorance you may have concerning my position—and what I *do* know. If you have forgotten, possibly, I think I ought to tell you, for I can't pretend to be on the island when I am not. It seems to me that quite in spite of myself I've got off it. What you said about Dr. Copin—"

She caught me up, now, a little wildly, discarding further attempt at evasion. Her face had suddenly grown white. "What did I say?" she asked.

"Oh, only that he was treating you for the amnesia," I replied. I couldn't possibly repeat the rest of it.

She put her hands to her face for a moment, hiding its expression. Then she withdrew them, compressed her lips, and, tipping her head back a little, shook it with the old gesture, as if to regain control of herself. Then she came up to me and put both her hands on my shoulders.

"It isn't your fault, I know, Mr. Castle. But you *are* off the island, and I'm afraid—that it's all over, now."

"Isn't it really all begun, rather?" I said.

Her hands dropped to her side, and she walked away to the window. "Oh, I don't know, I don't know!" she moaned. "You have made me think terrible things. But never mind. I didn't want you to know about me, I hoped we could be friends without. I couldn't risk it, I can't risk it now. You mustn't try to find out, you mustn't even wonder. Just be a little sorry for me—and wait."

She sat down in the broad window-seat, and laid her head back for a moment among the silk pillows, with a wearied settling of her body, closing her eyes. I didn't know what to say or do, so I did nothing, and was silent. She sat up again, took the crystal prism that still lay there, and gazed into it abstractedly, as if she were seeing visions. Then, still holding it, she looked up at me with a far-away smile. It was a new expression I saw on her face; it had the pathetic look of some elf, lost in a strange, terrible land. At last she said, "Come over here, and sit down beside me, please!"

I did so; and, still fondling the prism, which shot prismatic colors into the room, she said, as with great effort: "Did you ever, in your childhood, read the story of the 'White Cat?' It's a fairy-tale, you know."

The name had struck me as familiar when she had used it before, but I could not recall the story.

"It was one of those tales of the three quests, wasn't it?" I said.

"Yes; there are many variations of the same theme. It is the story of a king and his three sons. The father decided to leave his throne first to the one who would find the smallest dog in the world; then he gave them another quest, to find a piece of cloth that would go through the eye of a needle. Of course, the youngest son won each time, but the king wasn't contented, and for the final test commanded them to find the most beautiful lady in the world."

"And the youngest son won, of course. They always do, but they

never play fair. They're always helped by a fairy godmother or something."

"Of course. Such are the ethics of Fairyland. This prince was helped by a white cat. While he was on his travels he found her castle in a deep forest, and he was carried in by invisible hands."

"Just like me," I remarked.

She looked at me for a moment with an amusing expression of surprise, and a timid smile crept to her face. "That's so, isn't it! How queer! Why, I'll have to give you my little Hiawatha, to carry it out, won't it! Will you take him?"

"Oh, if you would!" I said. "I'd love to have him. It will be delightful to have something that has belonged to you."

"He's not the smallest dog in the world, but he's yours."

"And the third quest?" I reminded her.

"The third quest was the hardest of all. He came to White Cat's castle again, and he stayed a year. They had a most delightful time together."

"I can understand *that*. Just as we have had."

Her gaze went down to her feet. "Yes, just as we have had here at Midmeadows."

I reached over and took the prism from her hand. I couldn't help wanting to touch her, however casually.

"And of course—you don't need to tell me—he *did* find the fairest lady in the whole world?"

She smiled dimly and clasped her hands. "Thank you," she said, not too absorbed to pay me most graciously for my compliment. Then, more seriously, she added, "Yes, I am the White Cat. That is the way you must think of me, when you have gone. The enchanted White Cat!"

I dared not answer. All the peculiar moods she had shown me came up for a new vision. So she knew that something was the matter, something of which her amnesia was only a symptom? She had never come so close to it before. I stooped down, took her hand and carried it to my lips.

"White Cat," I said, "I don't know whether you are enchanted or not, but I know you're enchanting!"

"Be careful I don't scratch you!" she said, a little bitterly.

"Ah, White Cat never did that, I'm sure."

"Yes, once, when she was invisible. The Prince doubted her."

"Do you know how it ended?" she asked.

"How?"

"White Cat told the prince that, to destroy the fatal work of the fairies, it was necessary for him to cut off her head and her tail and fling them into the fire." She put her hand gently upon mine. "Would you do that for me, if I asked it?"

I puzzled with it. There was something tragic in her tone, but I was quite at a loss to interpret her symbolism.

"Would it ever come to that? Are you likely to call on me?" I asked her.

She tipped back her head again, shaking away some unpleasant idea.

"Ah, this is only the first quest, you know. You may never come again to my palace. But *would you?*"

A dreadful meaning came straight from her eyes to mine.

"No, I'm afraid I would not. It would be too terrible!"

She threw off a light laugh, and arose and walked to the book-case beside the chimney. Here she took down an old, tattered, red-covered volume and rapidly turned the pages till she found her place. Then she came back to her seat beside me, and, pointing to the lines, read aloud:

"'I!' exclaimed the Prince. 'Blanchette, my love! I be so barbarous as to kill you! Ah! you would doubtless try my heart; but rest assured it is incapable of forgetting the love and gratitude it owes to you.'"

"'No, son of a king,' continued she, 'I do not suspect thee of ingratitude. I know thy worth. It is neither thou nor I who in this affair can control our destiny. Do as I bid thee. We shall both of us begin to be happy, and, on the faith of a cat of reputation and honor, thou wilt acknowledge that I am truly thy friend.'"

"But it ended happily, like all fairy-

tales. So will yours, I'm sure," I remarked.

She let the book drop, wearily. "It must end some way—why not that?"

I clasped her hand. "You must not think of it, Miss Fielding! It appals me."

"Well, I won't speak of it again. But I would be glad to have a friend who would help me, if worst came to worst."

"You forget that, in spite of what I know, I am still on the island, after all; I can't yet judge of such a necessity."

"Well, Leah and I will fight it out."

"You said, once, that I could trust Leah in everything. Do you still mean that?"

"Absolutely. In fact, you can trust her when you're uncertain of me. Do you understand? I can't make it too emphatic."

"I understand," I said.

It was almost time to go, now, and so, while I went upstairs to see that my things were ready, Miss Fielding and Leah got Hiawatha, fixed a collar and chain on him, and put him into the carriage, highly excited at the prospect of traveling. Leah shook my hand and looked into my eyes with gratitude.

Uncle Jerdon drove up to the front door, and I got in beside him and captured the frisky puppy, who proceeded to bite my hand playfully. It had been arranged that I was to send someone down to repair the automobile, and I permitted myself to hope that I might find in that a sufficient excuse to come back myself. So, it was not altogether with a feeling of permanent parting that I finally gave my hand to Miss Fielding.

"Well, good-bye, White Cat," I said, as Uncle Jerdon took up the reins.

"Good-bye, Prince!" she answered, smiling.

We drove off, and, as we turned into the long lane which led to the highroad, I saw the two women standing, white in the sunshine, at the front door, and waved a last farewell to them. With all the sinister suggestions that had been crowding upon me, I could not bear to leave them alone. "White Cat,

White Cat," was still echoing in my ears.

Uncle Jerdon winked at me.

"Lord, she's as crazy as a loon, ain't she!"

"Do you think so?" I asked, coldly.

"Plum crazy. She ought to be into an asylum, and would be, if she had any folks to send her there. But she's a dandy when she's all right, you can bet on that!"

I didn't encourage him to go on, and, for the rest of the way to the station we talked of his rheumatism and the extravagance of his nephew's second wife.

PART SECOND

I

My machine had been repaired for a week, but I had not had it brought up to town, when I received a note from Leah. It was dated "Tuesday."

"Come down," she wrote, "if you can think of a plausible pretext, but don't say that I sent for you. Miss Fielding will not ask you, herself, but we need you very much. I trust to you."

I took an early afternoon train the next day, and, finding no one to meet me at the station, engaged a carriage to take me over to Miss Fielding's place. My driver would, I am sure, have been glad to gossip with me upon the lady's affairs, but I headed off all his hints, knowing pretty well from Uncle Jerdon's insinuations what the tenor of the neighborhood talk must be.

Midmeadows was about four miles from the station, and a half-mile back from the county road. The house was approached by two long lanes overgrown with shrubbery and hazels, one from the sea side on the east, and one from the main road on the north. We took the latter—a wild and tangled wagon-track, filled with stones and hummocks, and worn into deep holes. The boughs of trees constantly scraped across the roof of the buggy and often

hung low enough to threaten our eyes. Near the house, the lane took a turn round the corner of an extensive, old-fashioned garden of hollyhocks, rose-bushes, poppies and violets, then swung up to the green, eight-paneled front door, with its transom of old bull's-eye panes. The copse came in close to the garden, partly inclosing it on two sides. To the right of the house vegetables were planted, with meadows beyond, and behind, the hill rose almost from the stable. The whole place had a charming natural wildness, and seemed, as indeed it was, miles away from any other human habitation, but it was not uncared-for; its natural features had been amended and composed with the care of a true artist.

The house itself was long and low, covered with unstained shingles. A great square brick chimney rose from the middle of the gambrel-roof. The lower windows were leaded and built out into wide bays, but they showed above the little paned sashes of the original building. The front was almost hidden by climbing Cecil Brunle roses, now odorously in bloom. The southern side was lined with a row of geraniums which rose in huge bushes. Here, in the second story, was another bay-window of curious construction, somewhat resembling the stern of an old galleon. It was Miss Fielding's sitting-room, which I had not yet visited.

The place seemed deserted, for not even the dogs were visible. I got out and knocked, while my driver waited curiously to catch what was, probably, a rare glimpse of the mistress of the house.

Joy herself, wearing a white duck sailor suit, with a red handkerchief knotted about her neck, answered my knock. She held her hand to her eyes to shade them from the rays of the afternoon sun, so that I could not, at first, quite make out her expression. The first thing she showed, after her surprise, was a most cordial satisfaction at seeing me. She did not, apparently, expect me, but my presence delighted her. I saw next that she was in trouble.

The very intensity of her welcome alarmed me. The two vertical lines between her brows were deeply cut into her forehead, her lips were quivering, there were dark circles under her eyes.

She drew me quickly into the library, and I saw terror in her look. Her cheeks were pale and wan. Her hand trembled, as it lay on the back of a chair where she leant.

"Oh, I am so glad you have come!" had been her first speech, murmured in the hall, and it was repeated now as I stood before her. "I am so glad you have come! I need you so!"

"You are not well," I exclaimed.

"Oh, well enough—" she replied.

"Something is the matter, then—what is it?"

"Sit down and I'll try to tell you." She dropped into a chair herself, with her elbow on the table, letting her cheek fall into the hollow of her palm. Her eyes closed for a moment. Then she shook herself and sat erect. "I'm so sleepy!" she moaned. "I haven't slept since night before last."

I sprang up from the window seat. "Won't you lie down here and rest? Do!" I pleaded.

"Oh, I don't dare! I don't dare!" she cried.

"Tell me what is troubling you, so that I may try to help you!"

She looked up and said, "Leah has gone!"

"Gone?" I repeated. "Where?"

"I don't know where. I don't know when she went. I don't know even why."

"Do you fear she has met with an accident, then?"

"Oh, no, not that. Worse than that!" She spoke helplessly.

"Worse?" I could not understand.

"I mean I think I must have driven her away."

I still could not guess. "Why, how could you have done that? You mean that she took offense at something, perhaps?"

"Oh, I must have made it impossible for her to stay."

"But what did you do? She was devoted to you."

She sprang up and wailed out, bitterly, "Oh, I don't know! I don't know! If I only knew, I could do something. But what can I do, now? She's gone. She was my right hand, my eyes, my ears, my memory—but it's not *that*! It's that I could have been cruel enough to her to drive her away. Where is she? Where could she have gone, do you think? I've waited and waited to hear from her, or for her to come back—two whole days! I didn't go to bed at all last night. I didn't dare, lest she should come while I was asleep."

"You expect her to return, then?"

She was walking up and down the room, her hands clasped behind her back tightly. I could see that she was on the verge of hysteria. She turned to me again, and said:

"Oh, Leah will never abandon me, never! She's too true for that. But she's afraid to come back!"

I went up to her and led her gently to the seat.

"Now," I said, "tell me exactly what has happened."

She broke out again wildly, her face distorted with excitement. "I don't *know*! Don't you *see* I don't know? That's the horror of it! I may have killed her, for all I know!"

"Ah! Do you mean," I began, afraid to say it, "that you've forgotten?"

She stared at me. "Forgotten? Well, you may call it that. Yes, I've forgotten." She put her face into the pillow and began to sob convulsively. After this nervous crisis had spent itself she sat up, wiped her eyes and said:

"Oh, I'll have to tell you everything, now. I can't bear it any longer. It was bad enough while I had Leah to depend upon, but now I must have somebody to confide in, or I shall go mad—if I haven't already gone mad."

I looked over at the table where I noticed a coffee-pot and a cup on a salver. "How much coffee have you drunk?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't know. Cup after cup. I've been drinking it all day to keep me awake."

"That accounts for your nerves. You must rest. If you sleep a little, you'll get your strength back."

She sprang up suddenly, her gripped fists raised, her head thrown back in a sudden new access of alarm. "Oh, no, no, no! You don't understand! I *daren't* sleep! I'm afraid—afraid! How do I know what may happen, now when I'm so worn out!"

I had done considerable thinking while I was away, and I had done some reading as well. I was beginning now, to make it out, piece by piece, and put it together to an astonishing whole. It was too late in this crisis, for reserves, too late, for me to keep to my promise of not trying to know. The girl was distraught and alone. And, indeed, the door to the cupboard where her skeleton had been hidden was now well ajar.

"You are afraid, you mean, of the other one?" I brought it out deliberately.

She stared at me, as if fascinated. "Yes," she whispered, "of the 'other one'."

Then, for the first time, and quite unconsciously, I think, she used my name. It seemed so natural to me that I was not surprised.

"Oh, I'm so glad you know, at last, Chester. I'm so glad that it will be easier to tell you." She put her hand on my arm and looked up at me. "Now you know why I called myself the 'White Cat'."

"Yes, I see. Don't be alarmed. I'll help you. You must calm yourself and we'll find out a way. I know *her*, you know."

"Yes, I know you do. You must tell me all about her, some time. How you must have hated me!"

"Perhaps I can manage her, but no matter about her, now. We must think it all out, and decide, calmly, what to do. I'm not afraid. Trust me, and I'll see you through. It will all come out right, I'm sure."

I went on so, purposely iterating such phrases to lull her, and key down the intense strain which wrought upon her. Her eyes kept on me, and I saw

my influence work—my suggestion, I might say, since it was purposely hypnotic. Her hysteria made her abnormally sensitive to the treatment. She relaxed her attitude slightly, sighed, and dropped back among the silken pillows behind her.

"Oh, you're so good!" she breathed. "You *will* help me, I'm sure. You have helped me already! You're so strong—it's such a comfort to have you here!" She reached her hand out shyly and put it in mine where it lay, small and cold. It was the first time she had done so, except under the direct stress of an earnestness strong enough to rob the act of any personal suggestion. It was a distinct caress, fearless and genuine.

"Now," I said, "begin at the beginning, and tell me all about what has happened."

She took it up again with a new courage. "As I've said, I don't know when Leah left. I only know that when I rang for her yesterday morning she didn't come. I went into her room and she wasn't there. She wasn't downstairs. King didn't know anything about it."

"Nor Uncle Jerdon?"

"Uncle Jerdon has been away for three days, visiting his nephew, who's ill. You see, *she*—the other one—was here for two days running. It hasn't happened so for years. So whether it happened, whatever *did* happen, on Monday or Tuesday, I can't tell. Leah might have left either day."

"How do you know that 'the other one' was here for two days?"

"Only because Sunday is the last thing I remember before yesterday morning. The doctor was down then. You know that there's a hiatus when *she's* here—a perfect blank in my memory. I lose time, as *she* does, when *I'm* here."

Her mention of the doctor started a new train of thought, but I put that by for the present, to tell her of the letter I had received from Leah, which made it probable that she had left on Tuesday, the second day of "the other one". The situation was critical enough, I

was sure, for me to disobey Leah's injunction for secrecy.

"Oh," said Joy, "that relieves my mind a little. It shows that Leah had a plan, and she must have stayed somewhere near here, expecting you, though why she happened to miss you, I don't see. It's quite right for you to have told me, for I had already telephoned to you—today, after you started. I was surprised to see you appear so soon, for that reason. I was at my wits' end yesterday, but I hated to drag you into this. But what could I do? Doctor Copin has gone out of town for a few days."

"I'm glad you sent for me," I said. "I sha'n't have to feel that I'm intruding. But now the question is, why doesn't Leah come back? Why didn't she wait for me at the station?"

"She must have been awfully frightened, to have gone away like this," Joy said.

"Perhaps she discharged her—I know she complained of Leah a good deal."

"Yes, I've thought of that. But I fear it's even worse."

"In any case, there's no reason why she shouldn't come back, now that 'the other one' has disappeared," I said.

"How can Leah tell?" Joy exclaimed. "How will she know whether it is I or 'the other one'? We're really the same person, outwardly. There's no difference that she could recognize unless she talked to me. That's what has terrified me."

Then, for the first time, I saw the dilemma. How, indeed, could Leah know? The same woman, the same clothes—but yet, how different! "Have you no sign?" I asked. "Haven't you ever arranged it with Leah, so that she can tell?"

"Oh, not for a case like this. It has never been necessary. You see, the change always comes at night, at least always during sleep, so that when I wake up, she can tell right off, by asking me what I'll have for breakfast. We've arranged it so that I shall always give a fanciful reply, and let her give an

obvious commonplace one. But now, Leah daren't come in, for she knows that if I should happen to be 'the other one' there'll be the same terrible something that happened before—a quarrel, or worse."

"Still, there are some apparent differences. You dress differently, it seems to me. You usually wear white. Won't Leah know by her experience of you both?"

"Oh, no; you can't tell. She's so whimsical—sometimes she'll do some one thing, and sometimes another, like a child. You can't depend on her. She's tricky, too."

"I could tell, I'm sure—by your eyes. Hers are darker, and the pupils are dilated, aren't they, usually?"

"Yes—but Leah daren't come near enough for that, don't you see? Oh, she must be in agony, poor girl! But how do I know? She may be dead!"

"You forget that she has written to me since leaving."

"Oh, yes—that is a relief. But I may have hurt her."

"Oh, Joy! Don't say *you* could have—it was not you, it was Edna."

"Well, how can I tell whether or not I'm responsible?"

"I don't think she would have struck her," I said.

"No? She did, once, though. She stabbed Leah with a carving-tool on the wrist. It always sickens me to see that scar. Oh, she has a temper! Poor Leah!"

She lay back on the cushions again and closed her eyes. Her hand had relaxed in mine.

I looked at her, so wearied and pale, and said softly:

"You just drop off to sleep for a little while, and I'll think it over——"

She nerved her body, and pulled herself up.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed. "I'm dying for sleep, but don't you see I can't? If I should fall asleep who would it be that would awake? It might be *she*."

"By Jove!" I cried, "I hadn't thought of that!"

"I've thought of nothing else. That's

why I've stayed up and kept awake while I am so exhausted. If Leah comes back, she must find me here, and not 'the other one.' I must see her and find out what has happened—we must arrange for everything and decide what plan to adopt to circumvent her. Oh, I *must* keep awake!" Even as she spoke her head dropped again, heavily.

"You can't tell, then, when the change is likely to come?"

"Sometimes I have a feeling—a premonition—like that night, don't you remember, when I was so blue? I knew that I was going to change. But usually I can't tell. *She* has come, lately, about two days in the seven, but irregularly. It's 'most always after a deep, heavy sleep. You remember how late *she* used to lie abed? That's what worries me now. I'm absolutely exhausted, and if I do fall asleep, I'll go down deep. So deep, I'm afraid, that I'll change. Can you think what a horror that is to me? I *must* stay up till Leah comes. You must promise to keep me awake by every means in your power. But even then, what are we going to do? How can we arrange a way for Leah to get along with her?"

"That's where I come into the game," I said. "I think I can solve that problem."

"How did you get on with her?" Joy asked, timidly. It was quite as if she were asking about another woman, and feared to commit an impertinence.

"Do you like her?" she added.

"She's not to be compared to you, of course. But there's much that's likeable about her, and at least, we get on beautifully. And so we will this time, if she'll only let me stay. That's the difficulty."

"Oh, *she'll* let you stay, she'll be only too glad. She likes you, Leah says." Her brows drew together, and I wondered how much she knew.

"Well, then, I'll undertake to make her keep Leah."

"Oh, if you can do that—on any terms—we can stand it, both of us. Leah will suffer anything, I'm sure, rather than leave me."

"One thing more, then—since I must have all the information if I am to do anything—what does *she* know?"

"About me? Nothing, I think. At least she has never been told—we've always kept it from her. She thinks she's the only one."

"I don't see how that can be possible!"

"It does seem strange, but then, you know she's mentally undeveloped. In some ways she's a mere child. And then, too, she has never known it to be any different—why should she suspect that there is another personality—that she isn't the real Joy Fielding? She's conscious that she loses time, so to speak, and she thinks it is only the fault of her memory."

I thought it over a while. Then I said, "She wouldn't say much about it to me, and so I didn't quite get her point of view. It baffles me. She must know that she does things in the lapses, even if she doesn't recall them."

"I don't know that she's even aware of that. She may think that she's unconscious, during these lapses, but most likely it is just like dreams. Even if we vaguely remember them, for a moment, we forget them, and they don't seem to have been real—or, perhaps, they're like delirium, or insane intervals, of which she has no memory. Why, a man may even be simply drunk, and not recall what he has done, and that self is, really, a different personality."

"But," I pursued, "do *you* forget, too?"

"Yes. That is, almost always. At times I have had vague formless memories, as one has of dreams—that's about as much as this second life ever is associated with my normal one—if what I now have is the normal—how do I know even that? But I have known about the duality almost from the first, and of course Leah keeps me informed of everything that happens. You see, sometimes I'm not even aware that there *has* been a lapse—I don't realize that it isn't just the next day. Leah tells *her* as little as possible about me. She's easily managed and put off,

usually, but somehow of late she seems to have grown stronger. She seems to be developing, mentally. It frightens me a little."

"You don't think that anybody has told her, possibly?" I suggested.

"There's nobody to tell her. Of course Leah never would."

"Uncle Jerdon?"

"Oh, he thinks I'm crazy, and he never talks, anyway, I'm sure. He doesn't realize what's happening, for, after all, we're not obviously different; *she* might be taken for me in some queer mood, I mean."

"King?"

"I believe he thinks that I'm possessed of a devil. Which I think I am!" She paused to smile faintly. "Anyway, he minds his own business. I have an idea that he has a reason for wanting to keep quiet."

"Or, lastly, then, the doctor?" I put it hesitatingly, yet I wanted to know what she would say. Her answer was prompt.

"He wouldn't tell, I'm sure. Why, he wants to cure me. It would spoil all chance of that, I think, if *she* knew."

I wasn't so sure of the doctor, after what Leah had said to me, but it would do no good, now, to mention that. She had trouble enough at present not to worry her with new doubts.

"Then, is it possible that she might have come across some evidence of you, in your writings, or something that would arouse her curiosity?"

"Oh, I think she hasn't the least suspicion. As I said, it must all seem natural enough for her to lose time—she has always done so. Everything is accounted for to her by the fact that she forgets. Of course, I am careful to hide everything that is strictly my own, anything, that is, that *she* would not understand. Leah keeps all my private letters under lock and key. I'm very careful, for I've been on my guard since it first began."

"How long?" I asked.

"Ever since I was thirteen. That's when she came first."

"It's incredible!" I exclaimed. "Of

course, I've heard of such multiple personalities, of the celebrated ones, but they've seemed only like queer, improbable cases out of a book—monstrosities. Or, I've regarded them as half-crazed or hysterical or somnambulists. But *you*, Miss Fielding! You seem so beautifully sane, so poised, so complete—it's like a fairy-tale. Oh, you *are* the 'White Cat!' You are under a spell!"

"It's only because I'm not a poor girl that I'm not a mere 'case,' I assure you. You don't know what a life I've led, how every physician I've had has wanted to study me, or put me in a sanatorium or a hospital or an asylum or worse. Yes, if I hadn't the money, I should probably be in a mad-house at this moment. Do you realize how easy it would be for a physician to put me there? From the ordinary point of view, I'm virtually insane part of the time. I have been in great danger, Chester. But, having some money, I have been able to get away from people and seclude myself and retain my freedom—if you call it freedom to be cheated out of half of your natural life! I have had Leah, and she was enough. She understands, she's loyal, and she is, above all, wise and good."

"But the doctor—what about him?"

"Of course I must have a physician at times, and Dr. Copin is a good one, and interested in my case. He has been most kind to me. Of course I *am* interesting, though, psychologically, and he's probably written a monograph about me for some medical society already. But I have him chiefly for medical troubles, and to keep general run of this thing, enough to advise me."

This was rather different from what Edna had led me to believe, so I said:

"He hasn't attempted to treat you for this psychological dissociation?"

"No. He has wanted to. In fact, he's always urging me to allow him to see what he can do, but I won't let him. He wants to hypnotize me—but I don't quite dare—would you?"

"No," I said. "I'd advise you not to. If that's to be done you ought to go to a great specialist."

I thought I had a clue now that would bear following up, but I decided to think it over a while before I spoke of it.

So intently had we talked, that we had scarcely noticed the darkness which had fallen until King's gong aroused us. Joy arose wearily.

"Would you mind lighting the candles?" she said.

She waited till all the sconces were burning and then, as I went to the window, she said:

"No, leave the shades up, please! I want the windows left so that Leah, if she comes, may look in. I feel somehow that she is near here, that she will come this evening, if she dares."

"Why haven't you been out where she could see you, then? Have you thought to call her?"

She looked at me blankly. "Why, I haven't thought of that, have I! But would she dare come?"

"Try it now!" I exclaimed.

"I will!" She went to the front door and threw it open and cried:

"Leah!—Leah!—Leah! Come here! It's all right. I want you, dear!"

There was enough in the scene—the stillness that ensued, the gathering mysterious twilight that shrouded the house, the tragic quaver in Joy's voice—to make me thrill to its dramatic power. She stood there for a few minutes, waiting, all in white, her hands clasped on her breast, vividly illuminated by the candles. But no sound came out of the shadows of the night.

Joy closed the door; then, with quick second thought, returned to leave it ajar, and came back into the library.

We had moved almost to the dining-room, when, on a sudden whim, she paused, turned and looked toward the window. My own eyes followed hers. There was a dark face peering in—so dark that the whites of the eyes and the teeth were almost all that was visible, though enough to show who it was.

"Leah!" Joy cried, and ran again to the door, crying out hysterically. She called again, but no answer came.

It occurred to me that the excited accents of Joy's voice might well be misleading, and for the first time I thought to try myself. Joy had returned, to throw herself down, sobbing, full length upon the window-seat, her heart breaking with the suspense and disappointment. The strain was too much for her, after her hours of hope and fear. I did not stop to comfort her then, but ran to the doorway and stood in the lighted hall there in plain sight.

"Leah!" I called. "Come here, it's I—Mr. Castle. I want you!"

There was still no reply, but, feeling sure that Leah must be near at hand, I started off vaguely in the dark. I had gone but to the turn of the lane when I heard footsteps, running. Then in a rush Leah was upon me, and had seized my hand.

"Oh, Mr. Castle! I'm so glad you've come—but I was afraid to go in. I was afraid I might make it worse if she was there. Who is it? Tell me quick! Is it my own Miss Joy, or the other?"

"It's Joy," I assured her, "and she's dying for you. You must come in immediately."

She paused a moment, evidently wondering if I knew the secret.

"You're sure?" she said. "You know that there are two?"

"Yes—I know everything, now, and this is Joy—*your* Joy!"

She bounded forward, and I with her, stumbling in the dark, into the doorway, to the library. There for a moment she stopped, trembling so violently that her teeth chattered audibly. Joy was still lying stretched out at full length upon the cushions of the window-seat. At the first glance Leah did not see her, but then she ran forward, knelt, and threw her arms about her mistress.

But the next instant, starting back as if she had embraced a corpse, the girl sprang up and faced me, her eyes opened wide in horror.

"Oh, Mr. Castle, she's *asleep!* Miss Joy's *asleep!*"

II

FOR a moment I was too surprised to realize the full significance of Leah's cry. Then Joy's own words came back—the wail of her harassed soul—"If I should fall asleep, who would it be that would awake?" There she lay, asleep at last. As she herself had said, she was so utterly exhausted that she would "go down deep." Dared we awaken her? Certainly not Leah, who, of course, had seen the whole awful possibility on the instant.

I had to decide. What was to be done must be done quickly. If Joy were allowed to sleep long and deeply we might confidently expect "the other one" to awaken. The question was, could we, perhaps, rouse her before that incomprehensible change had taken place? It seemed to be the only thing to do. I determined, at all events, to take the risk.

Meanwhile, Leah had fallen into a chair, overcome with the disappointment of the situation. She was in a distressing state; her skirt was torn and soiled, her shoes dusty, her waist disheveled. Her black hair was awry; she was hatless. I thought at first that she, too, had fallen asleep from sheer fatigue.

I went to her and laid a hand on her shoulder to rouse her. She started with a frightened jump.

"Leah," I said, "I'm going to awaken Miss Fielding. It's the only thing to do, I think. We may be able to get her again, before she changes. But if not, we must be ready with some plan by which to manage Edna. We must hurry, though. First, tell me in the fewest possible words what has happened. Joy, of course, didn't know."

Leah had braced herself for the ordeal and was now quick, alert and concise. "She got angry on account of my 'trying to run her,' she said. You see 'the other one' was here for two days. I've always been able to manage her for one day, but the second day she seemed to be much stronger, and it was worse than it has ever been before.

She found out that I had burned some of her old clothes—Miss Joy had told me to—and so she discharged me and told me to leave the place immediately. I wouldn't go, and she went into the barn and got a horsewhip and threatened me with it. I was afraid, Mr. Castle! She was in a fearful temper. I was afraid she'd kill me. Then I went. I stayed all night in the Harbor. I wrote to you as soon as I got there, for I couldn't get you on the telephone. Yesterday I hung about the place all day, but she didn't appear, and I was afraid to come in. I positively didn't dare, though I knew it probably was Miss Joy. Today I stayed in that old cabin down by the road all day, for I was pretty sure it must be *she* who was here. I was so tired I fell asleep and that's how I missed you, I suppose. I've had hardly anything to eat since yesterday—only a few biscuits I brought with me."

I had been thinking out a plan as I listened and as soon as she had finished I gave Leah her orders.

"Listen, now. If it is the 'other one' who awakens, I'll tell her that I happened to meet you in the Harbor, and induced you to come back, on my own responsibility. Do you see? I'll see this through; you needn't be afraid, I'll take care of you, and it will be all right. Of course if it is Joy who wakes up that will be better. But we must act quickly. Can you tell immediately who it is that awakens, Joy or 'the other one'?"

"Oh, we can tell that easily enough, by the way she treats me!"

"Very well, then. You must awaken her now!"

I sat down where I could watch, and Leah went hesitatingly up to her mistress again, and shook her shoulder gently.

"Wake up, Miss Joy!" she said, softly, but firmly. "Wake up, you're catching cold, honey."

Joy moaned, turned a little, then drew herself together again, drowsily.

"Wake up, Miss Joy, you must have your dinner now!"

She moved again, and muttered, "Oh,

"I'm so sleepy! Let me go to sleep, Leah, please!"

Again Leah shook her. It seemed cruel to have to bring that exhausted body back to life. "Wake up, Miss Joy. Mr. Castle's here to see you! Wake up!"

She opened her eyes, now, and stared vacantly at us. Then her face changed gloriously. She flung her arms round Leah's neck.

"Oh, Leah! Leah! You've come back to me!"

It was some moments before either of the women was able to speak. They clung to each other, sobbing.

After the first hurried words of explanation were over, Joy went up to her room to wash her face and freshen herself for what was yet to be done. Leah went with her, almost too happy to think of her own sorry appearance. Both came down, after a while, in a change of costume, and went with me into the dining-room where King was patiently waiting to serve the meal so long delayed. Joy showed plainly the ravages which two days of suspense and agony had accomplished, but she was braced, mentally, by my presence and Leah's return, and in a condition to discuss, calmly, what was to be done. Leah had also rallied from her collapse, and the dinner brought her strength and courage.

The meal was over before we had settled how Leah could be kept in favor with "the other one"—whom we agreed, hereafter, to call Edna—and we were still uncertain as to our actions in regard to many other complications which might arise. It depended principally upon the extent of my influence with Edna. To hear Joy discuss these phases of her condition in that other state—her fondness for me, her whims, her weaknesses—gave me a strange sensation. But what struck me as most remarkable in her talk was the sense of justice she always showed in regard to Edna. One might have expected Joy to resent the intrusion of this second personality, so inimical to her own interests, but she never failed to acknowledge Edna's rights. Indeed,

her whole attitude was that Edna was strictly another person, rather than some part of herself broken off and endowed with an independent existence.

I quite lost myself in the subtleties of the case. To know that probably on the morrow I would be face to face with this same woman, in form and feature precisely the same and yet as different from her, really, as the West is from the East, gave me, in spite of my effort to concentrate my mind upon the affair, a sort of mental instability which was disconcerting. I could not quite believe that she would or could change. She seemed too real, too normal, if I may qualify such adjectives. And besides all this I had begun to think of her in another way, which made the prospect of any such change seem unbearable.

Meanwhile, Joy grew steadily sleepier. She roused herself occasionally, by an effort, but would droop the moment she had stopped speaking. Coffee no longer stimulated her. She began to walk up and down the room, leaning on Leah's arm, as if she were fighting off the effects of laudanum. Her suffering was cruel. We had, at last, to resort to strychnia.

So, for another hour we talked, while she became more haggard, more weak. Up and down, up and down the room they went. We talked of seeking the advice of some specialist, here or abroad, of the possibility of a direct appeal to Edna, in the chance of some compromise to be effected, of Leah's actions should she be peremptorily discharged again, of the prospect of her being able to stay in the vicinity, to return as soon as Joy's own personality had reasserted itself, of the proper method of safeguarding Joy's property, of the possibility of Edna's actually departing from Midmeadows—there were a hundred sides to the subject, and all baffling. There seemed to be nothing to do but to await further developments and see if I myself could not succeed in managing Edna. I rather wondered at the fact that Joy did not once mention the doctor as a

possible coöperator with us. It seemed to me that she instinctively distrusted him, though she never permitted herself to say so. It was no doubt her fairness, rather than any definite suspicions attaching to him that prevented.

Finally she stopped, scarcely able to hold herself up, as frail as a wilted flower, and said, with a perceptible effort at a smile:

"I'm afraid it's no use, Chester; I'm too far gone to think. I can't control my mind any longer. I must have sleep. You and Leah will have to settle it together—I'll leave it all to you—I'll agree to whatever you think best."

My heart ached for her. Her mouth was trembling like a child's just before crying, her eyelids hung heavy, all but closed. What she must suffer at the thought of sinking into temporary oblivion and resign herself to the inevitable possession of "the other one," I could easily imagine. I implored her to go to bed.

When the two women had left, I pulled down the curtains, seated myself in the arm-chair, lighted my pipe and began to think it over.

I had seen Edna but twice, but, from what had happened, I was able to form a fair idea of her character. She was, in the first place, by no means the equal of Joy's true self. Mentally, she was less developed; in some respects, as Joy had said, a mere child. She was inclined to be untidy, full of animal spirits, and constructive, in a mechanical way. She was not fond of animals, not, at least, of the dogs, and the same strain showed itself, I thought, in her prejudice against Leah, as a colored woman. There was something of that lack of charity, also, in the fun she had made of Uncle Jerdon, something of which Joy herself would be incapable. Edna was inclined to be bromidic; Joy was indubitably a sulphite. Lastly, there was, I remembered, that hint of—what could I call it?—indiscretion? forwardness?—in the way she had "made up" to me that last evening I spent with her.

Here, perhaps, was a suggestion as to

how I might manage her. It was not pleasant; the less so because I must necessarily keep it from both Joy and Leah. From Joy for obvious reasons—I could not think of permitting her to suspect that, even in this other phase, she was in the least lacking in delicacy—from Leah because she was, in her way, finer even than Joy. It would cause her, in fact, the keener suffering to know that any such thing was going on in the house. And yet I could not quite bear to act, even in these circumstances, secretly. The matter had been left to my judgment; but I could not yet make up my mind what was right. It was a choice of two evils, perhaps, but the thought of permitting even the lesser one to obtain troubled me. In two words, Edna was apparently fond of me. I didn't care to put it any more strongly than that at present, nor to say that I would admit this basis of friendship as a condition in which I could manage her. But the thought was affording. It was while I was turning over in my mind this phase of the problem that Leah came down.

"She fell asleep while I was undressing her," she said, taking a chair drearily. "I have never seen her so absolutely exhausted. She'll sleep late tomorrow; and," she added with a shudder, "she'll not wake up herself."

"Well, then, we'll have to be prepared for Edna," I replied.

"I'm so afraid of tomorrow!" said Leah. "Not for myself, you know, Mr. Castle. I'm willing to endure anything. But if she insists upon my leaving here again, what shall I do? I simply *can't* leave Miss Joy! What would she ever do without me?"

"I think I can manage it," I said, though, indeed, I was far from being confident. And then, to draw her out more, I added, "What I'm wondering is, if we hadn't better send for Dr. Copin?"

"Oh, don't!" she pleaded. "You must take hold of this alcove, Mr. Castle. He's been down here several times since you left, and I'm more afraid of him than ever. More, even, than I am of *her*."

"Why, what has happened?"

"Oh," she cried, "that's just what I don't know! She sent me away, usually, and often they were alone together all day. Sometimes they went off on long walks, too."

"With *her*—with Edna, I mean, or with Joy?"

"Oh, with Edna, of course—never with Miss Joy herself."

This gave me more to think about. If she had acted with the doctor as she had with me, a good deal depended upon the kind of man Dr. Copin was.

"You saw nothing, then, to arouse your suspicions?" I asked.

I saw immediately, from her embarrassment, that she had; but she finally said,

"No, nothing to amount to anything, I think." It was easy to see her motive in this denial, I thought. She could not bring herself to say anything that might seem like an accusation of her mistress, even her mistress in this other person.

She went on: "There's another thing that worries me. She's been telephoning to the doctor almost every day. She never did that before, and I can't understand it. I don't think of any reason she can have, for, physically, she's quite well."

"You mean Edna has?"

"No! Miss Joy herself. Of course Edna does, all the time."

"How long since Joy has been doing so?"

"About two weeks—she began, I think, soon after you left."

"And the doctor has been coming oftener?"

"Yes."

"Does the doctor come usually when Joy is here, or when Edna is?"

"Almost always when it's Edna."

"How does Dr. Copin know when she is here?"

"That's a mystery. I've wondered myself about it, but I don't know."

"Leah," I said, after thinking a while, "do you think you can trust me, whatever you should happen to notice that seems, let us say, a bit too much

like what the doctor might be imagined as doing?"

"You mean?" She drew a quick breath. "Oh, *that*? Why should you suggest it? Don't ask me to, please!"

"It would be better than permitting you to be driven away, wouldn't it?" I insisted.

She had to admit that it would.

"I don't say that any such thing will be necessary," I added, "but I don't want you to be surprised at anything. I don't want, in any way, to be underhanded with you. It seems that you must, in any case, leave it wholly to me. That is, of course, provided that there is no one else you can call on."

"Oh, there's nobody else! Miss Joy has no near relatives, and anyone we might send for would perhaps be only too glad to have her shipped off to an asylum so that they could get hold of her property. That's what has always complicated it. That's why she lives here alone. It might be, too, why we should watch the doctor himself." She stretched out her hands appealingly to me. "Oh, Mr. Castle, you must have heard of such cases—I'm told they're common. Can't she be cured, do you think? Can't we drive *her* away forever?"

"The doctor probably knows a good deal more about that than I," I replied. "I think that's probably why he's so much interested. But, if you *don't* trust him, the very fact that he does know so much about the subject makes him the more dangerous. I must have a talk with him. Do you know when he'll come again?"

"He may be here at any time. There's no telling. I don't think Miss Joy knows, but I have an idea that he may have arranged it with Edna. You can find that out for yourself tomorrow, can't you?"

"I think that I may be able to find out a good deal, if you'll only close your eyes."

Again that quick, indrawn breath, as if she was struck with a sudden pain, and she arose and stood before me.

"Oh, Mr. Castle, I can't help trusting you! I *must* trust you!"

"Will it help you," I said, looking her straight in the eyes, "if I tell you that I like Joy immensely—that, in fact, I'm very, very fond of her?"

She took both of my hands in hers, kneeling before me. "Oh, Mr. Castle!" she cried, "if you only *do*! If I could believe that, it would be such a comfort to me! I've wanted to believe it ever since you first came down. She's so alone—she has no one in the world but me! She needs you so much! Oh, you could do so much for her!"

"There's nothing, Leah, that I wouldn't do for her, believe me. Nothing! Do you know what that means? It means that I may have to do what she herself would never consent to have me do."

That was as far as I dared to go with the girl; indeed, it was almost as far as I had gone with myself. I could see hints of what it might possibly come to; but just how it would work out, I had no idea. It would be time enough for that, when it was time. But, on the whole, Leah was pacified and strengthened by my confession. As she was nearly in a state of collapse, by this time, I sent her to bed, and remained smoking in the library.

The question was, now, whether Edna wouldn't wonder why I had come down. I had, of course, the excuse of my motor-car to account for that, but I thought it likely that she wouldn't be exigent in the matter of excuses, and would be quite ready, for her own reasons, to welcome me to Midmeadows. At any rate, I decided that I would stay, whether or no. Joy most certainly wanted me here, now that the White Cat was out of the bag, and I was quite prepared to strain a point, if necessary, to induce Edna to be hospitable.

It was now ten o'clock, and, excited as I was, I found myself in no mood for sleep. So, hearing King grinding coffee in the kitchen, I walked out there to make his acquaintance. As I came in, he looked up and grinned serenely.

"Hello! You come back?" he said, affably.

"Yes, I'm back, King," I replied,

and stood with my hands in my pockets watching.

"I thought you come!" he said, nodding his head, wisely.

"Oh, you did, did you? Why?"

He went on automatically with his coffee-mill, still grinning inanely. "You likee Miss Fielding?" he asked audaciously.

"Heap much!" I said, laughing. He laughed with me.

"Aren't you lonesome here, King?" I asked next. "Not many Chinamen around here, are there?"

"Oh, Chinamen no good! All time make touble." He poured the ground coffee into a canister and took down a pot.

"There's a Chinese laundry over at the Harbor. Don't you go over there sometimes to smoke a pipe?"

"Aw! No good smoke pipe. More better stay here."

Now this was contrary to the habits of Chinamen as I had known them, and I scented something interesting.

"You no play fan-tan?" I asked.

"Aw! Fan-tan no good. All time lose heap money. No good!"

He shook his head again as he shook down his stove, poked it, and went to the sink to wash his hands and wipe them on the roller towel. I watched his deft, precise movements; he was like a machine in the accurate way in which he handled everything.

"What tong do you belong to, King?" I asked presently.

He gave me a cunning look.

"What-a-matter you?" he demanded.

"What for you want know?"

"Hip Sing?" I persisted, "See Yup? Sam Yup? What tong?"

"You sabbee China tong?" he asked.

"Oh, sure! You tell me, King. I keep him quiet. I no tell."

"Say!" he exclaimed, approaching me, grinning, "some time you help me get away?"

"You in trouble, eh? What's the matter? Hatchet-men after you?"

He still grinned in the absurd way Celestials have, when the subject is most serious. "No catchee me!" he declared.

"Oh, I see. They're trying to find you, eh? What's the matter? You steal China girl? You take tong money? You kill Sam Yup man, maybe?"

He kept his grin and his secret. "Tha's all light, no catchee mel" was all I could get out of him. But I thought I had a suspicion as to why he was contented to stay alone, so far from any of his race, and never go to town or even smoke opium or play fan-tan at the Harbor.

III

By the next morning my mind had cleared somewhat, and I arose full of eagerness and interest for what was to come. I looked forward to it, now, as to a play where I myself was to go upon the stage and act my part. I got down stairs early, to be ready upon the scene.

The day was fine, and I stepped outside, first to pay a visit to the dogs, who scrambled over me in an ecstasy of delight, crouched, leaped, ran off and returned, exuberant with life and affection. King was outside, watering a patch of flowers, and grinned a welcome. I took a turn down the lane, reveling in the sweet-scented morning air laden with the perfume of the hundreds of rose-bushes in front of the house, and then back, quite tuned up for any emergency.

Leah had not yet appeared, so I went into the music-room which opened from the hall, opposite the library. Here further evidence of Miss Fielding's taste was evident, though, except perhaps for my own chamber, it was the most formal room in the house, with as fine a collection of Chippendale, Sheraton and Heppelwhite furniture as I have ever seen, and a ceiling plainly a replica of Adam's. The room, in fact, was almost like one of those chambers in show palaces whose entrances are roped off with crimson cords. I felt that I oughtn't to be surprised if, on approaching the harpsichord in the corner, I found upon it a printed card with the legend: "*Défense de Toucher.*"

While I was looking about, I heard Leah's footsteps hurrying down the stairs. I turned and waited for her, and my glance must have spoken as plainly as any words, for as soon as she saw me she said:

"It's 'the other one,' Mr. Castle. She's up, now. She's telephoning to the doctor."

"How is she?" I asked.

"She's fresh and well enough, but she's in a bad temper. I had an unpleasant scene with her. She wanted to know why I was here, and I told her what you said—that you had met me and asked me to come back with you. Then she quieted down a little, and asked me when you came and how long you were going to stay. She seemed to be glad that you were here, and it pacified her, but I'm awfully afraid that she'll send me away again!"

"Don't lose courage," I said. "If she's glad to see me, that's a good sign, and it will make it easier for me. But we mustn't seem to be plotting here together. It won't do to arouse her suspicions, whatever we do. You leave it to me, and cheer up!"

With that, I walked into the library and waited. It was not long before I heard Miss Fielding's door opened and her whistling as she came rollicking down the stairs.

These noises, so thoroughly dissociated from my idea of Joy herself, created, unconsciously, a mental impression; an expectation that, without thinking of the absurdity of it, quite unprepared me for the sight of her when she appeared. I don't quite know what I *did* expect—something a bit unfamiliar, unnatural, I suppose—but what I saw was, of course, only the Miss Fielding I had always seen, pretty, slender, exquisite, the same brown-eyed, dark-haired creature as ever, at first glance the same woman whom I had left the night before, only now refreshed and full of life. It gave me a distinct shock. At second glance, it is true, there were almost undefinable, yet perfectly distinguishing, marks of the new personality—of Edna; and as I noted them—the carelessness of her

hair, her dilated pupils, the rolled-up sleeves of her shirt-waist, the odor of Santal—I adjusted myself quickly to the situation.

She came forward with a swinging stride and her hand held out in jovial welcome, smiling. Her grip was like a man's, as she said, "Isn't it dear of you to come down and see me, Chet! I was afraid that you'd got enough of me before and wouldn't ever want to come back again. I've missed you awfully! Sure, I have!"

She kept the hand I gave her, and swung it playfully. I said something about the automobile.

"I hope you can stay awhile, now you've come," she went on. "There are all sorts of things we can do, now you're well, you know. Is your rib all right, now? Can I hug you, if I want to?" She laughed frankly at me.

"I want to talk to you about Leah," I said. "I hope you'll forgive my taking the liberty of bringing her back, but I knew that you would have changed your mind, and would miss her terribly. I thought that, if I brought her back and asked you to keep her, it would save you the embarrassment of sending for her, you know. Of course, you must have her here. You could never find anyone who would fit in as well, who knows your ways; and, even if you could, Leah's too fine a girl to let go that way."

Her face clouded and she answered pettishly, "That girl's no good, Chet. She's regularly spying on me. She watches me all the time, and I won't have it! She interferes with my things, too, and she thinks she's too good to be a servant. If she'd only keep her place I wouldn't mind so much, but I won't have a nigger putting on airs with me. I've got to get rid of her!"

"But you can't get along without anyone," I protested.

"Oh, yes, I can!"

"Why, even Uncle Jerdon's not here, now."

"Well, there's King."

"King isn't exactly what you'd call a chaperon, is he?"

She laughed and began to galumph up the room and back. "Oh, I don't need one, do I?"

"It seems to me you do if I'm to stay here!"

"'Fraid-cat, 'fraid-cat!" she taunted, starting off again, sidewise.

I had to laugh, and by a quick inversion, she became serious, coming back to me, her chin up, her hands behind her, jiggling up and down on tip-toes.

"Do you really want me to keep Leah?" she asked.

"I really do," I answered gravely.

"Why?"

"Because I'm fond of you, and I think you ought to have her help."

"Oh! Are you really fond of me, Chet?"

"Of course I am—when you behave."

"I might try her again," she said, thoughtfully.

"She must stay here as long as I do, at least. Or else I can't remain."

She inserted her little finger into a buttonhole of my coat and said, without looking up, "Will you stay as long as I keep her, then?" She looked up, now, to smile at her strategy.

"I won't promise that," I replied, "but I shall certainly go if you get rid of her."

"Then I'll keep her. But it will be for you to see that she behaves, Mr. Chet." With that, she was away again, debonairly frolicsome.

I felt as if I had won the first battle, and could afford to hope that I might manage her. I was, however, skating on pretty thin ice, and it would take considerable skill to keep out of danger if I pursued these tactics much further. I had to encourage her enough to propitiate her and keep her friendly without letting the affair get away from my control.

She danced into the library again to suggest that we go for a walk, and I followed her out doors. As we passed the yard in the rear I saw the dogs lying in the sun. We had not got within twenty feet of them when they all arose, laid back their ears and began to growl. Old Nokomis, who had greeted

me so affectionately, only a half-hour ago, stood with her brush down, grumbling, her head tilted, her eyes on Miss Fielding.

She turned to King, who was filling a pail at the pump.

"Say, King, you tie up the dogs in the stable, hear? I won't have them about, barking and growling at me." She made an impatient threatening gesture at Nokomis, who retreated, still watching sharply, till, with an angry yelp, she turned, and ran into the stable. The other collies followed her. It was uncanny.

"I'm going to sell those dogs pretty soon," she remarked, carelessly, kicking at a thistle. "I don't see why in the world you wanted that puppy."

"Because you offered him to me," I answered, to see what she would say.

"Take them all, then, if you like!" she said. "I confess I'm afraid of them, sometimes."

We went along a lane behind the stable and beside a potato patch, and then, rising rapidly, through a gateway to a scrubby hillside, covered with huckleberry bushes and sweet fern. Miss Fielding, for so I must still call her, or you will perhaps forget that she was to all intents and purposes physically the same in this secondary personality, stuck her hands in the pockets of her red golf-jacket and swung up the path between the boulders, with a frank joyousness and *camaraderie* that seemed as natural in its abandon as the windy air and the sunshine; and yet, mingled with it, was a sort of innocent trickery—the petty ruses of a primitive woman cropping out through a veneer of civilization.

I doubt if I can recall in precisely their order the little things which occurred after that to make me notice as evidences of her pursuit of me, but as significant of her degree of craft, they amused me mightily. If I mention them, however, it is only fair to me to bear in mind that I regarded her quite as an abnormal phase of womanhood. She was not merely another person in Miss Fielding's guise, she was only the part of a person—a

collection of functions sufficiently synthesized to have an independent consciousness and volition, but by no means a perfect whole. This is, I believe, the modern interpretation of multiple personality. Certain definite psychological tracts are split off and run themselves, so to speak. One might perhaps say that it is as if France, Germany, Austria and Italy should float off the map, and achieve a lesser Europe of their own. The line of cleavage in Miss Fielding's case was chiefly along intellectual and moral lines; Edna was a lesser and, mentally, a younger Joy—less cultured, less conscientious. It was quite in this way that I studied her.

She stopped in the lane before we got to the gate, and, unfastening the little gold chain with a sapphire pendant which she had about her neck, held it out to me.

"Here, would you mind taking this, Chet? Keep it safe for me, please! I'm afraid I may lose it."

I reached for it, but before I could take it she had herself tucked it into my vest pocket and patted the place humorously.

She stopped again, afterward, to ask me to tie her shoe-lace. It was patently one of the many attempts she was always making to establish a closer physical contact, an attempt to keep the relation personal. I remember, also, that not long afterward, having climbed up a sandy bank with my help, and with compliments upon my strength, she stopped at the top to take off that same shoe and empty it of sand, disclosing quite unaffectedly a delicate little foot in a grass-green silk stocking. I helped her also over several stone walls, as she appeared to expect it, smiling to think how often she must have scaled them unassisted. We passed cows of which she professed to be much afraid and clung tightly to me for protection. It all sounds crude enough, but it was prettily done, and I was more amused than critical.

We reached the top of the hill and threw ourselves down on the grass to rest. To the east, the land fell away,

mottled with boulders and bushes, with a bunch of trees here and there, and away in the distance was the sea. On the other sides the middle distance was blocked with woods. It was warm and sweet with a fresh earthy smell, and still as a church.

She lay prone and, plucking a blade of grass, fell to playing with an ant-hill under her nose. I watched her, lazy and peaceful, basking in the June sunshine.

"Have you seen Dr. Copin lately?" I asked.

"No. He may come down today, though. I hope he will."

"Oh, you like him, then?" I said, giving my voice the inflections of mock-jealousy.

"Not as well as I do you," she said, rolling a little nearer me to tickle my ear with her straw.

"What makes you think he'll come?"

"I telephoned to him this morning, and he said he might. He's just got back to town and wants to see me. He runs down when he likes."

"On business, I suppose?"

"Yes, about my memory. He makes diagram things and tries experiments on me."

I was interested. "Experiments? What kind?"

"Oh, he asks me if I remember things. You see he tries to tell with his diagram things just when I will forget and when I'll remember, and he comes down to fix them up. I don't understand it much, but he says that he's going to cure me."

"Oh, he's going to make you remember everything, I suppose."

"I hope so."

"Do you remember what happened yesterday?" I asked.

"Why, I sent Leah away, didn't I?"

"No, that was three days ago."

"Was it?" she returned, heading off an infuriated ant with her straw. She seemed to take little interest in the subject.

"What did you want me to take back Leah for, anyway?" she said.

"I think she's honest and devoted. She's thoroughly fine. Do you realize

what temptations a girl might have who knew that you forgot things?"

"I suppose she would. I never thought of that."

"And Leah's mother was your nurse, too, wasn't she?"

"Yes, but Leah presumes on that and thinks that she can do anything she wants. Dr. Copin doesn't like her, either. He's got another girl he wants me to engage."

I couldn't help exclaiming, "Oh, I hope you won't!"

"Well, perhaps I won't, if you don't want me to, Chet. I was going to ask your advice about it. It'll make the doctor furious, but I don't mind. Poor Dr. Copin! I'm sorry for him, though. He's awfully hard up."

"Why! Is he so poor?" I smelled a mouse.

"He's all the time complaining to me, at any rate."

"I should think you'd be afraid to keep much money in the house. It's such a lonely place for burglars, you know."

"Oh, I don't keep much on hand. But I always have a little. I have a small income. It comes down every month. It's rents or stocks or something. It's safely invested and I don't bother about it."

It struck me that she took all this rather easily, but I soon found that it was the way she took everything. It had always been that way with her, and she saw nothing strange in it. Her amnesia accounted for everything. I saw how easily she might be led. Impressionable, and with a hasty, wilful temper, one who knew her temperament could soon learn to control her. I began to see how Leah's influence, which had heretofore been potent, might, perhaps, be undermined by the doctor. Here was the next thing to be investigated. But I would have to wait till I had had a talk with him.

She plucked a dandelion and put it into my buttonhole, looking up at me coquettishly as she did so.

"Chet, d'you know, I like you!" she remarked.

"Oh, I'm not a bit offended at that!" said I.

"I wish I could make you like me a little."

"You *are* looking for a sinecure, aren't you?"

She returned to her ants and poked at them meditatively.

"I don't know why I tell you such things," she went on. "I've never done so before. But you understand—don't you?"

Oh, yes. I understood. I had heard that sort of thing often enough before.

"I like you because you treat me just as you'd treat a man. You're not always remembering that I'm a woman. The doctor—" She broke off. I understood this, too, but it amazed me to find that she, so far away from the world, could have so easily found the woman's way.

"You've got a perfectly stunning profile," was her next play.

I showed her how, by pressing in the tip of my nose, it could be made decidedly Hebraic in contour. She pulled my hand away with a pretty protest at the outrage to my looks.

Next, she complained that her hair was "horrid," and that after it was shampooed she could never do anything with it; she calmly took it down and combed it, a fine silken cascade of brown. It was quite beautiful enough to warrant the exhibition, which she ended by plaiting it into two magnificent braids falling below her waist. Finally, she got up and gave me her coat to hold for her while she put it on, a process which she delayed unnecessarily, snuggling slowly into the sleeves and looking coyly up at me over her shoulder. Then she seized my hand, and, before I knew it, had started to run me down the hill. She stumbled and fell, on purpose, I'm confident; and I picked her up. How such contacts and familiarities affected me, considering my growing fondness for Miss Fielding, I leave you to imagine.

We walked down the path as gleeful as children playing truant, and, arrived at the stable, she proposed that

we go in to examine my machine, which she was anxious to try. The dogs had been shut up in the harness-room, and as soon as we approached, they set up a discordant barking. Edna scowled and went to the door to look in.

"Stop that noise!" she commanded irritably. A new chorus assailed her.

She had opened the door only a crack, but, as she spoke, Nokomis wriggled through, forcing it open, and, crouching in front of her, ears laid back, growled angrily. Quick as a flash, Edna took up a short whip that stood in the corner, and lashed at the bitch. Nokomis was upon her in an instant, and, before I could prevent, had seized her ankle and nipped it severely. Edna screamed and struck again, this time with the butt of the whip, hitting Nokomis on the forehead.

Yelping, Nokomis released her hold and with her tail between her legs dashed out of the stable door and disappeared.

Meanwhile, I had closed the door of the harness-room and had run to Edna. Her face was white, with sudden rage rather than pain. Nokomis had given her only a nip—the skin was not cut.

"I'll have them all shot tomorrow, if I have to do it myself!" she cried.

I did my best to calm her, and in a few moments she had recovered her temper enough to laugh at the episode, though her spite against Nokomis remained. She forgot it in my explanation of the motor, which she examined with great intelligence.

Luncheon was ready when we reached the house and we went into the dining-room. Here it was dim and cool and we fell naturally into a more placid humor. Edna seemed less the impetuous, irresponsible child she had been that forenoon, and I got my first hint of what was characteristic of her in this condition—that, as the day wore on, she seemed to grow steadily older and more developed mentally.

Over her shoulder the tapestry paper showed a picture of the combat between James FitzJames and Rhoderick Dhu; behind her the door opened and

shut from time to time admitting King with his daintily gotten-up dishes. He came and went like a ghost, all in white, while Leah, in a dark gown today, hovered like a shadow in the kitchen.

Edna had an amusing and not unpleasant sort of *gaminerie* at table. She was fond of selecting the daintiest, littlest piece of celery from the dish and tossing it over to my plate. She did not hesitate to use her fingers in cunning, unconventional ways, not as if she knew no better, but as if she knew herself to be pretty enough and charming enough, to invest the solecism with a personal indulgent humor. So she dipped her bread in the gravy audaciously, so she crushed her strawberries with her fork to a red welter of pulp, and added cream with a flourish. She carried it off perfectly; it was quite a distracting sight.

At two o'clock we got out my machine and set out for the station to meet Dr. Copin, she guiding the car according to my instructions. She was an apt pupil, and though the first stretch of rough lane required considerable skill in handling the motor, we got out to the highroad without accident, and put on top speed. The excitement of it kindled her spirits and a dangerous light shone in her eyes. She was bareheaded and the wind brought a fine glow to her cheeks.

"Isn't it great!" she exclaimed. "I'm going to get a car the first thing I do."

Her touch was clever and firm on the wheel, and she passed from one speed to another and handled the spark like an expert, already. There was no time for much coquetry, now, but I got a glance now and then on the straight level runs. She swung up to the station with style, and my hand, though ready to help her, was not needed. I congratulated her upon her skill and she was as pleased as a child.

"Oh, I'm going to show the doctor!" she cried. "You wait till he gets in and I'll give him a run for his money!"

The train appeared in a few minutes, and Dr. Copin, with his professional

bag, got out from the parlor-car. He seemed to be much surprised at seeing me. I thought that I detected something like annoyance, too, in his expression. I wondered if she had not informed him of my being at Midmeadows when she had telephoned in the morning. He greeted me cordially enough, however, inquired as to my condition, made a dull joke about my ribs, and got into the back seat of the car. I kept my place in front beside Edna, coaching her as we went along.

I talked commonplaces to the doctor, who replied laconically, and Edna, being absorbed with her work, kept quiet, her lips closed tightly, her eyes on the road ahead, waited for her chance to make speed. After we had got a little out of the village there was a fair length of level road, and I saw her hand fly to the speed lever.

"Be careful how you throw that clutch," I warned her. "Give it to her easy, now!"

Her thought was all for impressing the doctor with her ability as a *chauffeuse*, however, and she was too impatient. She threw on the speed lever suddenly, forgetting to release the clutch, and with a snap the chain parted. The released motor shook the car with its velocity. I grabbed the throttle from her, stopped the engine and the car came to a standstill.

"Oh!" she wailed, "I've broken something, haven't I?"

"I'm afraid you have," I answered, laughing. "But I'll see what can be done."

I crawled underneath the car, taking the attitude that has now become classic, and saw that it would be a case of fastening in a new link. I backed out, looked in my tool-box and found that there were no extra links there.

"I can't mend the thing here," I explained. "You and the doctor will have to get out and walk and leave me here. You'd better send someone back with a horse to tow me home."

She almost cried with shame and regret, but there was nothing for it but to do as I had suggested. I noticed a

faint smile on the doctor's thin face. He was undoubtedly glad of the dilemma, as it would temporarily rid him of my company.

"It's too bad I can't sew it up for you," he said drily. "I'm afraid it will require a capital operation, Castle. You'd better have a consultation with Uncle Jerdon. But if you need any anesthetic to keep it out of pain while you're waiting, I'll lend you my bag."

"Oh, my machine is used to it, you know," I replied. "If you'll only send back the coroner it'll be all right."

"Well, we'll hope for a *change* soon," he said. I verily believe the man meant it for a pun, for he closed one eye as he got it off. Edna giggled.

So they set out and left me. I took a seat, lighted a cigar, and waited as patiently as I could, not at all pleased at the thought of his having a free hour or two with her. At last Uncle Jerdon appeared on the scene, driving a span of horses.

"Hello," he greeted me. "The same old, sweet song, eh? Well, we all have to come to it, sooner or later. You ought to lead a hoss behind when you go. I'd as soon trust to an airship."

He harnessed his team to the car, and we proceeded slowly home. It was a humiliating experience, as it always is, but Uncle Jerdon was plainly hugely amused at my predicament.

"I guess the doctor wa'n't sorry ye had to stop here alone," he remarked.

"He's a-makin' the most of his time, naow, I expect. Nothin' like a little friendly rivalry for a bashful man."

"How long have you been back?" I asked, not caring for his personalities.

"Oh, I jest happened to meet 'em in the north lane as I come. I guess they wa'n't expectin' to see nobody there, by the way it looked. Miss Fielding ain't so crazy but what she knows what she's abaout sometimes, I tell ye!" At which he went off into an ebullition of silent laughter. This was disquieting enough information, for I could guess what he had seen, though I couldn't afford to encourage him. So I changed the subject.

"How long have you been down here with Miss Fielding?"

"Goin' on two year," he answered.

"I suppose the neighbors talk about her a good deal?"

"I reckon they do! But they don't get nothin' outen me. I sit an' look wise an' chew a straw and let 'em talk. Lord, how they do try to pump me!"

"Doesn't she ever see any of them?"

"Oh, yes, sometimes, when she's O. K., but she don't encourage 'em callin' much. They think she's so high and mighty, though, that they don't bother her to any great extent."

He proceeded now of his own accord.

"She's happy enough alone, I take it. Lord! I don't mind her at all. I attend to my business and she to hern. It ain't as if I was a woman an' curious, ye know. But when she abuses dumb critters, then I do get mad. I jest see ol' Nokomis in the hazels, as I come past. She had her tail atween her laigs, an' I'm afraid that means trouble. I usually see to it that the dogs is got outen the way when she's looney, but I expect Leah must have forgot to attend to 'em. Funny King didn't, either. But it will happen on occasion. Some day they's goin' to be trouble. Ol' Nokomis knows more'n most folks herself. I believe King's crazy, too. He's got a heathen idol in his cabin he's all the time worshipin'. Burns punksticks an' a little peanut-oil lamp in front of it, night an' day. But I get my own quiet fun outen it all. I'm satisfied."

We got the car safely home, and I spent the rest of the afternoon, with Uncle Jerdon's assistance, in mending the chain and other necessary cleaning and repairs. Miss Fielding and Dr. Copin stayed shut in the library. When I had gone up to my room to clean myself, Leah came in bearing fresh towels.

"Oh, Mr. Castle, can't you go in and join them?" she said. "I hate to have them alone for so long—you don't know how I dread it!"

"What are you afraid of?" I asked.

"I don't know! I don't know! Only I don't trust him."

"Have you seen anything more?"

"Enough to make me worried." Then she brought out, painfully, "Mr. Castle, do you think we would have any right to—to listen?"

"You mean really to eavesdrop?"

"Yes." There was a look of pain in her eyes. I saw by this confession how far she had gone with her fears.

"I hardly think so, yet," I answered. "It would be pretty hard for us to do, wouldn't it?"

"But you remember that Miss Joy said, last night, that she would leave it all to your judgment. Oughtn't we to protect her, perhaps, find out just what it is he's doing?"

I thought it over at length. But it was a resource that I couldn't help wanting to leave till the last. After all, it wasn't as bad as that, yet. Except in Edna's familiarities with me, and Leah's vague fears, I had no reason for fearing anything wrong. All depended upon the doctor's motives in being alone with her. He might, indeed be making love to her, but then perhaps he was truly in love; he might even want to marry her. It was a mad-denying thought for me, but, after all, it was, strictly, none of my business. He had a right to try to woo her, and it couldn't, at any rate, go far without Joy herself becoming aware of it. She would be the first to acknowledge that Edna had a right to permit it. If, however, he were dishonest in his motive, if he were, for instance, after her money, that was quite another matter, and it was obviously my place to interfere. We would have, at least, to see that Edna could not get hold of any property.

Lastly, and this seemed, at the time, most probable, he might only be carrying on a series of experiments with an interesting patient for some technical end. True, Joy had herself refused to permit him to treat her, and this probably accounted for his devoting himself to Edna; but it was not, so far as I could see, dangerous. My position, therefore, was a delicate one, and I made up my mind to have another talk with Joy before showing my hand in interference.

I went over all this with Leah and she listened attentively. She iterated that she didn't trust Dr. Copin, and that she feared there was danger at hand. I could see that the hint that he might want to marry Edna frightened her most of all.

"How can I tell Miss Joy?" she said. "How can I hint that Edna is too free with him—and all the rest that I suspect? Why, Mr. Castle, if she knew that, it would kill her! But *oughtn't* I tell her? Is it fair for her not to know? It's the most awful situation! I can't bear to think of it! We must save her from herself, though, as well as from the knowledge of herself—do you see?"

She was sensitively alive to the intricate phases of honor that were entangled in the situation, and, showing such fineness and delicacy, I could quite ignore the fact that she was a negress. But that was merely the negative aspect of my admiration for her. From this time on, the more I was thrown with her, in the intimate way required by our coöperation, the more I began, actually, to find in her a positive beauty, a beauty that was truly of her race and type—a beauty that foreshadowed what, were environment to permit its development, her race might in time attain, when, even though the skin were still dark, the features, insensibly modified by mental processes, would lose something of the extravagance of modeling now so repellent to whites.

Such vision came in moments like this, when her spirit was aroused and free. Usually, and always when suffering patiently the contempt or anger of Edna, I saw her only as the personification of loyalty, the loyalty of the hound who licks the hand that smites him. It was then as if her woman's soul were crushed back further into the figure of the servant. But always those two qualities were finely blended in her—she was slave and friend, not alternately but at once. One dwelt with the other in perfect peace. No hunchback ever carried his deformity with a nobler grace than she the trial of her color.

Miss Fielding and the doctor remained closeted together till dinner time, when we all three met at table. She was slightly flushed and her eyes were keen and bright. It was as if she somehow saw more—as if she had passed from that curious mentally apathetic state which I have called childlike, and were inspecting a new world. But this analysis, no doubt, comes from what I learned later rather than from my observation at that time. Perhaps all that impressed me then was that she had, in some way, changed. I could find no way in which to account for the precise degree of difference that I noticed. She was alternately gay and abstracted, at which latter times she fell unconsciously into poses so like those of her normal self—Joy's self—that it gave me, often, a start of surprise.

But, as if to cover all this, the doctor was more than usually jocose, in a mechanical way so devoid of real humor that it irritated me. Try as I might, I could not get him to talk seriously. At every remark or question of mine, he threw me off with some nonsensical comment. It was the more maddening because of Edna's inevitable laughter, and it was evident that she thought him a most amusing companion, though to me he seemed wholly without atmosphere or radiation; everything appeared calculated, deliberate. I saw that there could be nothing between us, unless, indeed, it should come to open conflict. He was the sort of man who could, I was well aware, arouse all my antagonism. It is easy enough to see that I was already jealous.

We talked on thus through the meal and then adjourned to the library for our coffee. As we entered I cast a quick look about to see if I could catch any revealing sign. I saw nothing except that the Morris chair was drawn up to another, so that the two faced each other, almost near enough to touch. There were a few sheets of ruled yellow paper on the table. These the doctor took up as he went in, and placed in his pocket.

The talk languishing after a while, we

spent the evening at cards, and what with the doctor's sallies and Edna's obvious replies, I think I was never more bored in my life. The only amusing thing about it was the way she played us off, one against the other, twitting the doctor with his remissness when he was not so complimentary as I was to her, and accusing me of a lack of humor when I did not join their *badinage*. She distributed her favors impartially, upon the whole, though I caught several indications of some secret understanding between them, which was not surprising, considering the length of their acquaintance. He seemed to enjoy the evening as little as I, and to be a trifle embarrassed, even somewhat anxious. This was evident in the way he watched her covertly and in the way he headed off all my questions, as if always on the defense. From a look she gave him, once or twice, I got the idea, also, that his foot was busy, under the table, and that he was using that method of signaling when the conversation got dangerously near whatever it was that he wished to avoid. This interested me considerably for the reason that her other foot was touching mine in a way that assured me of her conscious intention. The situation was as unpleasant as it was extraordinary. I lost myself, at times, in the inconsistency of it—the strangeness of her actions so unattuned to the exquisite body which was wont to house such delicacies of soul. She had indubitably changed from those first whimsical madcap moods of the morning. Somehow her personality had deepened; it had grown in strength and color; it was more assertive. She was no longer carelessly, thoughtlessly frank and forward; she had some definite motive.

Her coquetry and raillery lasted, thus, till ten o'clock, when she excused herself and went up to her room. The doctor and I remained in the library. I determined to cross swords with him.

"I'd like to know what you make of Miss Fielding's case," I began. "Anything, that is, that you can tell me with

propriety. I confess I'm much interested in it."

He got up, long and thin, put his hands behind him under his coat-tails, and stood backing the fireplace.

"Oh, I know what *you're* interested in!" he said, with his grin.

"Do you think there's any chance of her recovering?" I said, ignoring his sarcasm.

"What's she lost?" he asked.

"Why, herself, hasn't she? Today, at least."

"Oh, she'll find that tomorrow, I expect!" He balanced himself on his toes, and smoked complacently.

I might as well have stopped there, I knew, but at the risk of being impertinent I was bound to see what I could get out of him.

"Have you found any law governing these alternations?"

"Why, yes; I have good reason to believe they come in turn—first one and then the other."

I got up. I fancy he came as near to receiving a blow on the point of the chin that moment, as he ever did in his life. But I held myself in check.

"Of course, if you think that it's none of my business, I'll ask you no more questions," I said, angrily.

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" He shook his head with a deprecatory wave. "Only sometimes it's easier to ask questions than to answer them. This is a common enough case, as you know, if you know anything about psychology. A mild form of mania; that's all."

"Do you mean to say that you consider it merely insanity?" I demanded.

"Oh, we're all insane, more or less," he pursued, in his maddening, non-committal way. "Insanity is a relative term, you know. 'All the world is queer but thee and me, and even thee's a little queer,' as the old Quaker said."

I did my best to keep my temper. "It's very unfortunate, at all events."

"Oh, I don't know. We can't have too many of such a fine woman as Miss Fielding, can we? I'm sure I'd like to know a half-dozen of them!"

"You must confess it's hard on her."

"Oh, it gives her something interest-

ing to think about. All alone here, you know." He waved his long arm comprehensively over the scene.

"But aren't you trying to do anything for her? She surely wants to get over it." I was determined to push him into some definite statement. But it was no use.

"Oh, she'll come out all right," he replied, yawning behind his palm.

"She's too fine a woman, as you say; she has too fine a character, too fine a mind—" I began, in protest.

"My dear Mr. Castle, women are always changing their minds." His shoulders shook as he laughed silently at his own joke.

"You'll change yours, before I've finished with you," I said to myself. But there was no use continuing the dialogue, and, bidding him good night, I went up to bed. Leah had given her own room up to him and she spent the night in Miss Fielding's study. I heard him come stumbling up at midnight.

IV

It was with a feeling of great relief that, next morning, I heard the dogs barking jubilantly in the yard, answering, each in turn, to their names. Nokomis, I knew by her heavy note, had returned to the house. Joy was, then, herself.

This was better than I had dared to hope. My suspicions in regard to the doctor were now strengthened and I felt intuitively that, in some way, his presence at Midmeadows accounted for the increasing frequency of Edna's visitations.

The last three days had shown regular alternations of personality, but I recalled the fact that on both Monday and Tuesday it had been Edna who had possessed Miss Fielding's body. With this thought came also the recollection of Joy's unusual actions in telephoning to the doctor.

The two facts seemed to indicate a significant relation—a relation, perhaps, of cause and effect. A third

hint came—that such anomalous states of personality were sometimes developed during hypnosis—and the three separate thoughts snapped together, crystallizing into an idea. Had not Dr. Copin hypnotized Edna, and given her the post-hypnotic suggestion that she, in Joy's person, should telephone to him in the morning? It seemed probable, for I could not doubt, now, that it was to the doctor's interest to keep Miss Fielding as long and as often as possible in her secondary state, as Edna. As Edna she was impressible and easily managed to his ends. Edna invited him and welcomed him to Midmeadows, while Joy was cold and reserved. Everything that had happened dovetailed into my hypothesis—his annoyance at my presence, as the especial friend of Joy, and his own particular cultivation of Edna—the proof, in fact, seemed conclusive. What, then, was he trying to do?

I went down early and found him, lean and lank in his suit of muddy brown, wandering about outside, his long hands clasped behind his back. He greeted me civilly enough, but without warmth. I did not disturb him in his mood, and he meandered up and down, turning over a stone with his foot now and then, stooping to pluck a flower and sniff it thoughtfully, humming a tune to himself as he strolled.

Leah came to the doorway, gave me a happy look, nodded meaningly, and passed upstairs with Miss Fielding's tray. I went back to the stable to see the colliers. Nokomis bounded up to me and nuzzled my hand. Her forehead showed a scar where the whip handle had struck her, and I talked to her about it condoleantly, in canine gutturals. We seemed to understand each other perfectly.

At half-past eight Leah called me in to breakfast. I found Dr. Copin already at table.

"Going up to town today, Castle?" he asked, tucking his serviette into his collar.

"No, I hadn't thought of it," I said, sitting down.

"H'm!" he ejaculated, thoughtfully.

"I didn't know but we might be taking the same train."

"Oh, I think I'll try my machine when I leave," I said.

He grinned. "Haven't you had enough ground-and-lofty tumbling yet?"

"Oh, I'm game. It's such fools as I that keep you fellows busy; you ought to encourage us."

He smiled drily. "How long do you expect to be down here?"

The boot was on the other foot, now, and I was amused at his interrogation.

"I have some business to talk over with Miss Fielding," I said. "It depends largely upon her how long I remain."

"H'm!" He went on with his breakfast.

When Miss Fielding came into the room my first glance would have told me that it was Joy herself, even if I had not been given the hint already. I watched the doctor's eyes leap at her, and then fall, disappointed. He, too, knew, in a glance. He seemed to be surprised as well as disappointed. Leah had evidently not told him, and he had not dared ask. He shrugged his shoulders almost imperceptibly as we both rose to meet her.

"Good morning, doctor!" she said, giving him her hand, smiling. "I've just done a funny thing! Leah told me that you were here, of course, when I waked up, but I forgot it so completely that I've been trying to ring you up on the telephone."

I saw his pale-blue eyes grow narrower as he laughed with her. He was pleased. "Well, did you get me?" he said.

"Are there two of you, too?" she returned, and the thing passed off in a general laugh.

I took it that she had already heard from Leah of what had happened yesterday and I could not help admiring her calmness and self-restraint. The last thing, of course, that she could remember would be her anguish of two days ago when we were all so agitated over Leah's absence and dramatic return. Joy was used to these lapses;

she had been so long schooled by her changes that she was usually poised outwardly and calm, ready for any emergency, on her guard against betraying surprise; but I could not help picturing to myself the nervous excitement of her awakening when her memory first rushed back and she had to learn hurriedly the history of the day before. How much, I wondered, had Leah told her?

Her attitude toward Dr. Copin, while quite that of an old friend, was so different from what it had been the night before that he must have felt somewhat uncomfortable at my seeing it. Of any such difference Joy was herself quite unconscious, but the interest she plainly showed in me served to heighten it. She was still full of gratitude toward me for what I had done in bringing Leah back—the doctor, on the other hand, was only making one of his periodical calls; she was anticipating also his again urging his request to give her a definite course of treatment, a thing she had steadily opposed. He came, as I understood it, only to keep track of her disorder in a general way, and to advise her with regard to it; and it was, so far, more because she had not enough confidence in his proficiency in this special subject, rather than any innate distrust of his character, that had impelled her to refuse a course of hypnotic treatment.

His elaborate wit failed to receive much encouragement from Joy. The conversation was, therefore, a little stiff for some time, and resulted finally in a dialogue between Joy and me, the doctor maintaining a silence almost surly.

After breakfast, however, she took him into the library for a short colloquy before it was time for him to leave. I waited outdoors. They came out in a few minutes, she, I saw, a little disturbed, a frown on her face. Uncle Jerdon drove up in the carriage and the doctor got in, bade us a conventional farewell, and was carried off.

We sat there for a while without talk, Joy gazing straight ahead of her, ab-

sorbed in her own thoughts. Then she turned to me and said:

"Edna is coming oftener than she used to. I don't like it!"

"Did you speak of it to the doctor?"

"Yes. He tried to reassure me. But I'm still uneasy. It was bad enough before, to lose two days a week, but if I'm to be robbed of half my time, it will be unbearable."

"Did you ask him if he thought he could prevent it, in any way?"

"Yes, and he asked me again to let him hypnotize me."

"Oh, I hope you refused!"

"Why?" she demanded, turning quickly to me. "I've refused only because I didn't consider him able enough—I was afraid to experiment, to put myself into his power, alone as I am here, and without friends. I wasn't quite sure enough of him. Have you any other reason why I shouldn't? He said that he could inhibit Edna's appearance, if I let him hypnotize me. He said she ought to be sent back to where she came from, and that he wanted to 'wake me up,' as he expressed it—make me normal again."

"Then he lied!" I remarked decidedly.

"Oh, Chester, you don't know how you frighten me! If I can't depend upon Dr. Copin, a physician, where can I look for help, and for protection against *her*? You have done much for me, but you're only a layman, after all; I need professional advice."

"Yes, of course," I said. "It is impertinent of me, it's positive audacity, to think I can help you, but, don't you see, the doctor, if he *isn't* to be trusted, is the more dangerous because of his knowledge? He can do you positive harm."

"Why do you distrust him?" she insisted. "I must have specific reason before I dare even to disregard his orders."

"Very well, then," I said. "But I may seem more than impertinent—even inquisitive."

She made a fine, impatient gesture. "Oh, we've got beyond such considerations—tell me!"

I turned to the door and called Leah, who came out immediately.

"Leah," I said, "do you know how much money Miss Fielding had in the house yesterday?"

"Forty dollars, exactly."

"Will you please find out how much of that is left, now?"

She ran upstairs, while we waited. She returned in a few minutes with Joy's purse.

"There's only fifteen dollars here," she said, showing the money.

"And it wasn't spent for anything you know of?"

"There's no possible way of spending it," she answered.

"Then there's twenty-five dollars to account for. Dr. Copin undoubtedly has it. Are you in the habit of paying him cash, Joy?"

"Oh, no. Always by cheque, and, of course, I settle all his bills; that's understood between us. Edna can't draw any cheques, anyway, for her handwriting is quite different from mine. What could she have given him the money for? Perhaps she didn't—how can we tell? Perhaps she hid it somewhere."

Leah interposed. "Oh, no, Miss Joy, the purse was in your room all the time, I'm sure."

"It may have been justified—it's barely possible," I said. "But yesterday Edna told me that the doctor was always complaining of being hard up. What else would he harp on that for, if not to borrow from her? Frankly, it's my opinion that he does. You know how impressionable and impulsive she is—anyone with tact can easily manage her."

Joy stared at me. "Oh, that implies too, considerable intimacy, doesn't it? Much more than I have with him, at least!"

"It certainly does," I replied.

She caught the inflection I put into the remark. "Do you mean—?" She stopped.

"I mean that he is not above suspicion; that we should watch him."

"I'll never let him come down here again," she cried. "I'll dismiss him!"

"We must go slow," I said. "We must be surer, first; and besides, you forget that Edna likes him."

A look of pain came to her face. "She likes him?" she repeated.

"He cajoles her. She flirts with him perhaps. At any rate, I doubt if she'll refuse him admittance."

She rose and began to walk up and down the gravel walk. "What shall we do? What shall we do?" she exclaimed, extending her hands toward me. "Why, he is dangerous! Chester, I'm positively afraid, now. It's too horrible. It's getting worse every day!"

"Tell me," I said, "why have you been telephoning to him every day or so, Joy? You never used to, Leah says."

She looked blankly at me. "I don't know, I'm sure. It's funny, but I never thought much about any particular message. I suppose I was simply a little lonely and it occurred to me to ring him up, that's all."

That was enough for me, and I didn't explain the reason for my question. She had no time to worry about it, at any rate, for just then Leah, who had been listening silently, put in:

"Miss Joy, do you know what became of that little gold chain of yours with the sapphire pendant? Edna wore it yesterday, but I can't find it anywhere."

"Maybe it's up in my room somewhere," Joy answered, still walking up and down the path. Then suddenly she stopped and faced me.

"Oh! Do you suppose she could have given that to the doctor, too?" she exclaimed.

I laughed. "No, she gave that to me to keep for her," I said, and I drew it forth from my vest pocket where it had remained since the little scene behind the stable.

Joy's eyes had followed my hand and fixed on the chain as I held it out. Her lips opened with a swift intake of air as she gazed. The two vertical lines appeared in her forehead. She put out a hand, tentatively, but did not touch the ornament. It was as if she were

in a trance. Then her lips moved automatically.

"Keep it—safe—for me, please!" she whispered. Suddenly her hand went to her forehead. "Oh, what was it?" she cried.

"Try to recall the rest!" I commanded, watching her sharply.

She thought a moment, then shook her head decidedly. "No, it's gone, now!" she said.

"You can get nothing more?"

"Nothing. It was like a dream, like something I had done and said before. What does it mean—do you know?"

"It's precisely what you did say—what Edna said, that is—yesterday."

For some time she was too bewildered to speak, and stood staring at me, through me. "You mean that Edna said what I've just said?" she asked.

"Yes." I handed the chain to her.

She put it away with a sharp gesture. "Oh, no! If she gave it to you, keep it! I have no right—" She turned away.

"But it was only to keep till we got home," I explained.

She looked at me keenly and threw back her shoulders proudly. "No, it wasn't. She meant you to have it."

"You remember it, then?"

She smiled sadly, pityingly. "No. But I'm a woman, and I know."

Walking away to a rose-bush, she plucked a bud and returned slowly, as if to hide some emotion. It was quite time to comfort her.

"Joy," I said, taking her hand and bringing her to the steps again, "I have been doing a good deal of thinking, and I have a theory that I'd like to prove. I'd rather not say anything about it till I'm sure of it, but when I am, I'll tell you. Have I your permission to use my own judgment, even to the point, perhaps, of eavesdropping?"

"Oh, is that necessary, do you think?" She clasped her hands nervously at the thought. "I don't know. It's all so mixed up in my mind. Who can settle the ethics of a case like this?"

"It may come to a fight between you and Edna, I think."

"Oh, that's what it has come to!" she exclaimed. "That's what is killing me. Who is Edna? Where did she come from? Where does she belong? I must be fair, I want to be just to her, however she treats me. If I could only see her or hear her—if we could only communicate in some way there might be an agreement. But she's like a ghost—a character in a book. Is she a different person, or only some phase of myself? Dare I come into open conflict with her? Why, I may be only destroying myself! I have to be *she*, don't I? Won't I have to bear whatever I do to her? How do I know what danger may lie in any action I may take?"

"Yes," I replied, "I've thought of all that. I'm convinced that, as the doctor says, it's only a case of 'waking you up.' It's as if you were a somnambulist—walking in your sleep—dreaming half the time, irresponsibly. To wake you up may be uncomfortable for her. It may be like a surgical operation that she has to suffer, but when it's over you'll regain your health and reason, and, by the same token, so will she, and you'll forget all the pain. However, it hasn't come to that yet. What I want, now, is the right to explore, investigate, examine, experiment, perhaps, and then, when I have decided for myself, we can decide what course to adopt. If you're the White Cat, I'm going to be the prince, and save you!"

She took my hand and pressed it affectionately.

"I trust you, Chester, and I'll agree to anything you think best. I feel as if I were being drawn into a maelstrom. Oh, what wouldn't I give to be just a normal, natural person, like everyone else! Why am I tormented so? Yes, you *must* help me, Prince!"

"Well, then, now we'll talk no more of it for a while. Let's forget it, and go and see the collies."

Her face cleared and she sprang up, tossed back her head with her characteristic gesture and went with me to the

stable. The dogs were all out in the sun and as soon as we appeared they surrounded us joyfully. Nokomis walked up to Joy in her stately way and offered a paw.

"Why, Nokomis!" Joy exclaimed, "how did you get this awful cut on your head? We must attend to it immediately! Chester, won't you go in and get me some water and some salve? Leah will give them to you."

When I came back she was sitting on the ground with the dog's head on her lap. Nokomis's deep brown, soft eyes looked up gratefully while the wound was washed and dressed. The tears actually came to my eyes at the sight. The scene of yesterday, when these two were arrayed against each other, seemed impossible. It should go without saying that I made no mention of it to Joy, for it was evident that she had no idea of Edna's treatment of the collies.

"Now, Nokomis," Joy said, getting up and shaking the dust off her skirt, "listen! I want you to go in the house and get my golf jacket, and bring it to me." She spoke very distinctly, accenting the important words. Nokomis trotted to the kitchen door, barked sharply, and was admitted.

"I'm educating her," Joy explained to me. "I want to see how far I can get her to understand what I say. This is rather a test, for there are at least three related ideas, the house, the jacket and bringing it back. But she's extraordinary at picking up words; she has really quite a vocabulary. Of course, you hear a good many stories of the intelligence of collies, but I've never heard of their being systematically trained except in a utilitarian way. I'm experimenting with more and more complex ideas. I hate the ordinary dog tricks; they're undignified and unworthy. I'm tremendously interested in animal psychology. Queer, isn't it, when I can't even handle my own!"

Nokomis appeared, in a distressed frame of mind, and whined.

"Well, Noko, what's the matter? Can't you find it?"

Nokomis barked, ran a few steps towards the house, and returned.

"All right, we'll go in and see what's the matter."

So we followed her into the house. The red golf coat that Edna had worn yesterday was hanging upon a hat-stand in the hall. Nokomis went to it, shook it with her teeth, turned round and whined. It was as near talking as a dog could do.

"Oh, I see," said Joy. "You got the house and the coat all right, but you thought I meant just to come back, did you? No, *bring*, Nokomis, *bring*, *bring*, *bring*!" As she spoke, she placed the jacket in Nokomis's teeth and showed her what was meant. "Next time you'll know, won't you?" she said.

"Now we'll try your number lesson," Joy said as we went back to the stable. She and I sat down on a watering-trough, while Nokomis waited, her head tipped, her ears straight up, with the soft silky tips drooping like tassels. Her sloping eyes were quick and canny.

"One!" said Joy.

A single bark from Nokomis.

"Three!"

Correct, again.

"Two!"

Still correct.

"Four!"

Nokomis was perfect.

"Five!"

Four barks, then, after a pause, another.

"Six!"

This was too much for the collie. She barked, I think, eight times, having quite lost her head.

"Pretty good, isn't it?" said Joy, as I congratulated Nokomis—on the neck, at the spot dogs love. "This is straight culture, you know, no trick. I don't give her any sign, as they do stage dogs. I'm just trying to see how far she can go. I've begun, too, to teach her colors, but I haven't succeeded very well."

"It's immensely interesting," I said.

"I wonder why collies are so much more intelligent than other dogs."

"They aren't. Caniches are fully as

bright, but collies have been trained, for generations with the sheep, and it has raised the level of perception. That's why I try to keep up their education, for of course they'll deteriorate if they're only bred for exhibition purposes. But the training of the shepherds isn't everything. My theory is that the reason why a collie is quicker is because his eyes are trained. Most dogs, you know, won't use their eyes if they can use their noses or their ears. Hunting dogs will run past quarry that's in plain sight, following a scent without looking. A collie has to watch his sheep sharply, and his eye is developed. Their ears have been trained, too, by the shepherds."

"How long would Nokomis keep this up, obeying your orders?"

Nokomis, who had been resting inattentively, looked up immediately.

"As long as I asked her to—wouldn't you, old girl?" Joy rubbed the dog's neck with her toe. "A dog's chief joy is to be in some way, in as many ways as possible, a part of his master. I never knew Nokomis to tire of doing anything that kept up and accented that relation. It is the mainspring of a good dog's life—it accounts for a dog's devotion. It's trite enough to say, but there is no love on earth so sure as a dog's love. It's unending! it's unchangeable!"

Did Nokomis know, as she watched her mistress, there, of that strange soul that stole into the girl's form at night? Did she answer for herself, instinctively, with an animal's secret prescience, the question that Joy had asked in anguish—"Who is Edna?" The thought came into my mind as I heard Joy's words, pathetic in their unconsciousness of how the love of Nokomis waxed and waned with her own obsession. Surely Nokomis's was loyal and true. Surely she had never betrayed her mistress's confidence. Perhaps the collie alone knew the secret of the White Cat.

We took Nokomis with us, and walked over the hill as we had walked the day before. "We," I say, for, had

any spectator been on the hillside to watch us pass on both days he could have seen no difference in the couple. With me was the same gracile creature abounding with life and beauty, the same small, brown-haired, brown-eyed woman with the flower-like hands.

But I need not say how different she was in talk, in gesture, in her mental attitude toward me. Yet, though I have shown Joy as intense, even as melancholy, this was not her natural quality. She could be as gay and debonair as Edna, but it was vivacity of a different key. Her laugh was as light and ringing, but it was provoked by other occasions. Her sallies were as joyous, but they sparkled with wit and comprehension. She was as frank, but she was keen as well. So it was not so much the sunny-dewy as against the quiet-shadowy, as it was April rivaled by June.

After luncheon with Leah, we went up to Joy's private sitting-room, or study, as she called it—and it was really that, as I saw by the books which lined its walls. She had indeed time enough to read them! It was a woman's room, but it was expressive of virility as well as taste. Like most of the other rooms, except the sleeping chambers and the dining-room, it was paneled to the ceiling—Joy confessed that she disliked plaster even when covered with paper. The wood here was a beautifully grained poplar and the general air of lightness and coolness was helped by the high, irregular ceiled roof, whose beams and ties stretched across from wall to wall. The bay window which I had noticed from the outside was a nest of cushions of all colors of the rainbow—I speak literally—varying from violet, through blue, green, yellow and orange to red and purple again. There was a great table here where I saw a large microscope, and a case of slides. An upright piano stood in a corner. I noticed also a typewriter and a camera on a tripod. The place had an air of work and study quite different from Edna's clutter and disorder. It showed me in a glance

how it had been possible for her to live alone, so far away from civilization.

Here we spent the afternoon discussing her condition and prospects. She asked me much about Edna, for, though she had always been kept informed of Edna's actions by Leah, and had attained by this time a pretty good comprehension of her alternate's character, she was much interested in my opinions and conclusions, and I was able to cast new lights upon this second self of hers which gave her a new point of view. I could not yet bring myself to speak of Edna's coquetties, for of this she had no suspicion. There had been few visitors to Midmeadows since she had lived there, only the doctor and her lawyer, I believe; for she had, of late years, become more and more retiring as Edna's appearances had become more frequent.

Whatever indiscretions Edna had permitted herself with the doctor had been well concealed, as they were so much alone. I myself would never have suspected anything, had she not been free enough with me to set me on the watch. And all this sort of thing, too, had evidently been only of recent growth—it was coincident with Edna's increasing "strength." I don't think that either Leah or I had, for an instant, any compunction on Edna's account, against informing Joy of what might be going on. We were loyal to Joy alone—it seemed unquestionable that she was the rightful sovereign self, and that the other was an interloper—our devotion did not hesitate at any violation of confidence incident to such a revelation. But we did want to spare Joy's feelings as long as possible. For, under whatever spell, it was still Miss Fielding whose actions we must criticize. Irresponsible as she was, she could hardly bear to think of herself as appearing in such a light, knowing what the picture must be in our eyes, and her own. Indeed, it takes a more than ordinary amount of philosophy to know that one has shown a lack of taste or delicacy even under the effects of an anesthetic or an intoxicant, without suffer-

ing from mortification and shame. Her embarrassment would be quite as poignant as her sensibility was exquisite.

Joy had kept a diagram of her changes, and she got it out from her desk to show me. The first appearance of No. 2 had occurred when she was about fourteen years old; the second a month or so later, and there had been this usual interval until she was about twenty-one. From that time on, the appearance of No. 2 had increased in frequency, until for the last few years it had settled into a fairly regular average of two days in every week. There had been in her early childhood, beginning when she was seven years old, some curious abnormal tendencies that had not been recorded; it seemed, therefore, that her development was progressing, roughly, in seven-year cycles.

If that were so, the present daily alternation of personalities seemed to predict a gradual overthrow of her normal self, the original No. 1. The more I discussed it with her, however, the surer I was that this sudden access of strength on the part of Edna was chiefly attributable to the doctor's influence. I did not say so in so many words to Joy, for I wanted first to prepare my plan, but there was no doubt in my mind, that whatever was his object in overthrowing Joy's control, and making Edna paramount, my coming had somewhat interfered with his experiments, and he had, consequently, increased his energy in a determination to succeed as soon as possible in his attempt at the replacement. How terrible this slow eclipse of her soul must be to Joy, I knew well enough.

It is hardly to be wondered at, therefore, that, thrown into intimate contact with so beautiful and so rare a character, I should bend all my will and powers toward helping her in her misfortune. I had decided already to make any sacrifice, and devote all my time to the task. Nor is it to be wondered at, either, I think, that, so devoting myself to her cause and being

so privileged to study her closely, I should, by this time, have fallen deeply in love with her. Her very desperation, her hopeless, futile struggle against something outside any ordinary human experience drew me to her with an ever-increasing fondness. Her reliance on my aid strengthened the bond day by day, hour by hour. How much the doctor's interest in her had given me the additional fillip of jealousy, I wouldn't care to say.

We came back to the incident of the gold chain more than once. What did that phenomenon mean? It was almost the first, and certainly the strongest and clearest symptom of a common share in Edna's life that Joy had ever had. Was it, then, Joy's dim vision of Edna's experience, or was it more sinister and significant, an evidence of Edna's ability to project herself into Joy's waking life? Did Edna, perhaps, have a coexistent, sub-conscious life? That it meant something, that it marked some new phase in this last cycle of development, we were both sure.

So we talked and talked that afternoon and through dinner. In the evening, exhausted with speculation, we gave it all up. Joy played her violin for me for an hour or so, and we lost all thought of the problem in our common enjoyment of her music. Then we started a game of chess, which, hard fought, lasted till bed-time.

Before we retired, Joy went out to see the dogs, and on returning brought in Nokomis.

"I think I'll let her sleep in my room tonight, Leah, she's got such a poor, sore head," she remarked.

Leah looked at me as if to ask my help or advice.

"Aren't you afraid that—Edna may object in the morning, if she should be here?" I asked.

Instantly her suspicions were aroused. "Object to Nokomis? Dear old Nokomis, how could she?"

Nokomis whined anxiously, stretched her forelegs and waited.

I didn't know what to say. Joy knew, of course, that Edna was not

particularly fond of collies, but she had no idea of the extent of her dislike. There was, I feared, some danger if, after what had happened yesterday, Edna and Nokomis found themselves together in the same room. Still, I wished to spare Joy, as long as possible, knowledge that would, I was sure, make her extremely sad. As Leah had tacitly left it for me to decide, I said:

"Leah, can't you call Nokomis out early in the morning, before Miss Fielding awakes—in case——"

"Yes, I think it will be all right," she replied.

If Joy suspected anything definite in this quick exchange of glances she did not inquire. She turned to bid me good night, and went upstairs, Nokomis with her.

V

I was aroused in the night by a growling in Miss Fielding's room. Wide awake in an instant, I sat up in bed and listened intently, but I had not had time to get up before I heard a short, angry yelp, and then Nokomis's footsteps pattering out of the room and going downstairs in hasty jumps. I struck a match and looked at my watch. It was a quarter past two o'clock. I knew well enough, then, that Edna would take Miss Fielding's place in the morning. It was much as if a ghost had entered the house and lurked in the darkness. For a long time I was too agitated to sleep.

The next day was cool and cloudy. I found a fire burning in the library when I went downstairs and Leah was there, putting the room to rights. She looked up at me gratefully, as if it were a consolation to her to have someone to lean upon.

Leah had, by this time, begun to treat me quite as if I were her master. I had always tried to meet her upon terms which would prove that I had no prejudice on account of her color, but that very attitude of mine seemed to make her more willing to do me un-

looked-for service. I am told that this is not, as a rule, true of negroes, and the Southerners, who by sentiment and tradition hold themselves as superior in virtue of their birth, keep the respect of colored folk and receive a willing acceptance of subservience that no Northerner, capable of no such race feeling, can achieve. That Leah's gratitude for my consideration did express itself in such devotion proves, perhaps, only that she was intrinsically finer—that she was, as I have already expressed it, ahead of her time. There was much pathos in it, nevertheless, for I was quite ready to regard her as a social, as she was, undoubtedly, my moral equal.

"Did you hear Nokomis?" she asked immediately.

"I should say! Didn't it awaken Miss Fielding?"

"Oh, no, she sleeps heavily at these times. But it awakened me—wasn't it horrible! It was Miss Edna coming in! Think of it!"

"How is she this morning?"

"Fretful and irritable—to me, at least. She asked for you, and she has been telephoning to the doctor again. Oh, I wish you might prevent that. What does she do it for, Mr. Castle?"

"He is probably making her do it. You see, he has attained a sort of power over her, I suspect. Just how much, we must try to find out. Do you know what she said?"

"No; she sent me out of the room. But I think he'll probably be down today. How I dread it! Why does he come here so often?"

"He's coming down, Leah, because he realizes that we've begun to fight him. It will be open war, this time, I expect. We don't like each other, and I strongly suspect that by tonight the cards will be shown down."

"He's trying to get rid of me!" she said hopelessly, going on with her dusting.

"Well, he'll have to beat me there, first," I said. "So long as Edna doesn't have two days running I think I can keep you here safely. But we must be ready for the worst. Is there any

place near here where you could stay, if necessary, for a day or so?"

She reminded me of the old cabin a little way down the road, and thought it might be fitted up well enough. She wouldn't be afraid to stay there alone, and could probably manage her meals somehow, through King, who was always ready to help her.

"Have you a revolver?" I asked.

"Miss Joy has one, and I can easily get it."

"It might be well to have it at hand,"

I suggested. "I'd advise you to ask Uncle Jerdon to clean up the cabin for you. And be sure that the colliers are fastened up, too, won't you? Where's Nokomis now?"

"Nokomis came downstairs and spent the rest of the night in the kitchen. When King opened the door, she went out. She'll not come back, I think, till Miss Joy's herself again."

"That will be tomorrow, I trust. But by that time we must have something definite to report to her. Today, if possible, I am going to find out exactly what the doctor is up to. I shall hold back for no scruples; I'll listen, I'll lie and I'll cheat to find out his game and how to outwit him!"

"I'll do anything you say, too, Mr. Castle. I'm willing to take the same pledge." This was for her the consummate sacrifice. She would, I am sure, have given her honor, if necessary, to save her mistress.

We were interrupted then, by Miss Fielding's appearance—I dare not call her Edna lest one forgets that in almost every outward aspect she was unchanged. Indeed, had her body, instead of her mind, been metamorphosed, I think it would have been easier to adjust one's self to the strangeness of it. But Edna's words and Edna's actions constantly gave the lie to Joy's voice and Joy's face. One could not even treat her as insane. It was definitely another person in masquerade. My soul went out to her at the sight, to return, chilled at the revelation of that strangeness. I was constantly being tricked by my memory. When I had become so interested in the conver-

sation as not to notice her appearance it was easy enough to feel that I was talking to quite another than Joy, but upon my first sight of her, or when, after having looked away for a while my eyes returned suddenly to her, the surprise of Edna's words coming from Joy's lips gave me a shock. But with all this I had begun to accept Edna as a perversion, a distortion of Joy's self, rather than a separate individuality, and I was caring too much for Joy now, not to witness the working of the spell without a constant, fiery protest in my heart.

After our first greetings Leah disappeared, and we went into the dining-room. She sat opposite me at the table as I breakfasted, her elbows on the cloth, her chin on the backs of her clasped hands, looking at me.

"Well," she began, "I've forgotten again, Chet."

I wondered what was coming. She seemed more absorbed, more introspective than usual, for what of this phase she had heretofore manifested had appeared usually later in the day. She watched me, too, with a curious intentness.

"But you're not so bad as you have been," I offered. "You know you only lost a day, this time."

"No, I'm getting hold of myself, I believe. The doctor is helping me, I'm sure. I used to lose four or five days every week."

"I congratulate you!" I said, falsely enough, I confess. But I must at any cost placate her.

"How was I yesterday, Chet?"

"What d'you mean?"

"How did I act? What did I do? Was I very different from what I am today, for instance? Tell me all about it!"

This staggered me. She had never betrayed so much curiosity before; she had always taken her lapses, in her careless, thoughtless way, without much question. I saw Leah, in the kitchen, stop and listen, her lips parted, showing her white teeth.

"You were very lovely—as usual!" I said.

"I'm glad you found me so, Chet. You've never said that before, you know!"

"Well, I've thought so, often enough!"

"Did you like me any better than you usually do, then?" she insisted, keeping her eyes on mine.

"Oh, there are some times when I don't quite approve of you, I confess."

"When, Chet?"

"When you abuse the dogs—or Leah." Leah disappeared.

"But they abuse me, too, horrid things!" she complained, peevishly.

"And I can't for the life of me see why you're so fond of Leah. She's a great trial to me. I'm only keeping her on, now, on your account, and, if you scold me, I'll be sorry I did."

"Oh, I'm not going to scold you. You're too charming."

"As charming as I was yesterday?"

"Almost." I hated myself for saying it.

"What did we do yesterday? You haven't told me yet."

"Why, we talked, mostly. We sat up in your study all the afternoon, and in the evening we played chess."

"Played chess? I must have played pretty badly!"

"Oh no! In fact, you gave me a hard fight and beat me."

"Chess is stupid, though. I'd rather talk. What did we talk about?"

"Oh, about you, mostly."

"Did you make love to me?"

"No."

"Why not, if I was so very much nicer than usual?"

Her deliberate misquotation, a common enough feminine trait, was characteristic of Edna's newly acquired mental agility, but in addition, I perceived that there was something behind even that. It was something new for her to proceed so categorically. It embarrassed me not a little, and yet I could not quite bring myself to lie to her outright even to throw her off the track. It was almost impossible when I looked her straight in the face—Joy's face—nor, of course, could I reveal anything of what had really happened.

"Oh," I said, "you're very nice now,

but I'm not making love to you, you see!"

She further disconcerted me by saying, "Why not?"

There was nothing to do now but to carry the war into Africa.

"Because Dr. Copin seems to have that right—or privilege," I gave her, boldly, making a good deal of it by my tone.

"Dr. Copin is very nice indeed to me; indeed, he's nicer than you are to me, Chet. He tells me things that you won't, and he's helping me to get my memory back. Why don't you help me?"

"How can I help?" I asked.

"Tell me how I was different yesterday, if I was different. Was I different toward him?"

"Of course, I don't know how you've been in the habit of treating him before I came."

"Well, how did he treat *me*, then?"

"Oh, you'd better ask *him* about that! But," I added, to try her, "I think he's undoubtedly in love with you."

"And you're not? For shame, Chet!" She looked demurely at me, as if merely to impugn my taste. "He's not nearly so nice as you, Chet," she continued, "but he does treat me better. He's done a great deal for me, and, if I ever do get well, it will be through his advice."

"What does he do? How does he treat you—can you tell me?"

"Why, he hypnotizes me, you know. I told you that before."

"And gives you suggestions, I suppose?"

"I don't know what you mean. I just go to sleep, and after a while I wake up again. He hasn't been able to do it till quite lately, and I don't understand it very well, anyway. I don't care, so long as I recover. He says I'm a remarkably interesting case."

"So you are, Edna, most assuredly. You would be, even if you were all right."

"Thank you for that. I'll put down one good mark to your credit. But

tell me—was I pretty yesterday, Chet?" She looked up at me earnestly under her brows.

"Very pretty—beautiful!"

"Was I clever, too?"

"Very!"

"More than usual? More pretty and more clever than I am today?"

Wishing to see what she was driving at, I risked a chance shot. "Yes," I said.

"Oh, I *hate* you!" she cried, and she got up in a pet and threw herself out of the room, scowling.

I hurried after, to propitiate her, but she was already outdoors. I overtook her in the lane and tried to take her hand and get her back, but she flung away from me and walked on without answering me. Giving up the chase, I returned to the library, very sorry to have aroused her temper. I knew I should have lied to her for Joy's sake, for the sake of peace, for the sake of final victory.

I was pretty well convinced, by this time, that Edna's eyes were opened, and she knew what was going on. She must undoubtedly have been informed by the doctor the day before. That would account for her behavior at dinner and in the evening. For the first time in her life, she had become aware that, during those lapses when she lost days at a time, someone else lived for her, animating the same body. If, as I was not too modest to imagine, she cared for me, the reason for her anger was evident. Edna was now probably definitely pitted against Joy in the conflict that was doubtless already on. I was determined, therefore, to bring the thing to a crisis, that we might, at least, know where we stood.

I had not been alone fifteen minutes when I saw Leah approaching the house. She was sobbing, her head bent down, her handkerchief to her eyes. I ran out to meet her, my heart in my mouth.

She stopped and told me, trembling convulsively as she spoke, that while on the way with a broom to the cabin, intending to make it fit for temporary

occupancy, Edna had met her and questioned her. At Leah's attempt to conceal the truth, Edna, who was already in an angry mood, burst into a fury and struck Leah across the face with such force that her cheek was badly cut, inside, by her teeth. The revolver had dropped from Leah's pocket; Edna had picked it up, accused Leah of stealing it, and had gone on down the lane.

"Oh!" Leah cried, passionately, "I don't care how much she hurt me—she's not responsible, I'm sure—but I'm afraid that now she'll send me away again. Then what will become of Miss Joy? If she'll strike me, she'll do worse. If we don't do something pretty soon, it will be too late!"

"You must keep out of sight as much as possible for the rest of the day," I said, "especially as the doctor will probably come down. If we could only prevent that!" At the words, an idea occurred to me. "What train does he usually come down on?"

"The ten o'clock from the city. He usually takes luncheon here."

"Then there's just time, perhaps to catch him. Come upstairs. I'm going to try to see if we can't find out something. It's a desperate chance, but I'll take it. The thing can't be much worse, even if we're found out."

We went up into the study and I called up the doctor's number. While we were waiting for it I gave Leah her instructions.

"Don't speak loud, just barely loud enough so that he may hear with difficulty, and let him do most of the talking. Pitch your voice as high as you can. Ask him what train he's coming down on. I'll take the receiver and listen, and tell you what else to say."

In a few minutes the bell rang and we were connected with the doctor's office. I heard him say, "Hello! Is that you, Miss Fielding?"

"Say 'yes,'" I whispered. Leah did so.

"Anything the matter?" he asked. Leah said "No."

"What did you want, then?" was his next question.

Leah put the question about the train.

"I'm going to take the ten. I'm starting right off. What's the matter with your voice? It sounds different, and it's so weak anyway, I can hardly hear it!"

I told Leah to say, "What?"

"Oh, never mind," he exclaimed impatiently. "There must be some trouble over the line. I'd never recognize your voice at all. Can you hear me plainly?"

"Yes," said Leah.

"Well, look out for Castle," he went on. "Don't let him know that you suspect anything, will you?"

"No," from Leah, at my prompting.

"He's trying to make trouble for you; and he will, if we don't look out. He's in love with the other one, and you'd better try and see if you can't get rid of him! Now, Edna!"

"Yes?" Leah again repeated my whispered word.

"Are you listening?"

"Yes."

"Are you listening?" Why was he repeating the question?

"Yes!"

"Are you listening?"

At this, I suspected a formula he might be using for some hypnotic suggestion. I whispered to Leah to say "Yes, yes," faintly.

"Meet me at the station, sure. You will come alone! Good-bye!"

I hung up the receiver, pretty sure that he had not suspected the deception. I went downstairs again, and as, by eleven o'clock Edna had not returned to the house, I had no doubt that she had gone to the station of her own volition to meet the doctor. This was fortunate, as, seeing her evidently in obedience to his suggestion, he might be less likely to question her about telephoning and thereby discover our ruse. I was, however, nervous at the prospect of meeting them. Leah could scarcely be kept if the trick were discovered; I would have hard work brazening it out myself.

At about noon I started down the

north lane to meet them, and discover the state of affairs in time to let Leah know. Half-way to the road, however, I happened to recall what Uncle Jerdon had told me about seeing the two, the day we had broken down in the automobile. I decided to hide and see what I could discover—in a word, to spy upon them. I was by this time in no mood to be nice about my choice of weapons, and I took the first one that came to hand.

I had not waited long before I heard voices approaching, and I concealed myself behind a clump of bushes to watch. I was too far away to hear distinctly, and, in fact, they did very little talking—an occasional exclamation from her, and the doctor's nasal replies. My eyes told me more than my ears—enough to prove that, however Edna regarded me, the doctor also came in for considerable more of affectionate demonstration than I had suspected, and either he was not so conscientious as I had been, or he was actually in love with her. Their actions were those of acknowledged lovers. Why, then, had she flirted with me? Was her behavior now, perhaps, mere pique caused by the jealousy I had aroused in the way I had spoken of Joy?

I went in as luncheon was served. Edna met me a little coolly, the doctor more so. I was decidedly uncomfortable at being now a guest in a house where I was perhaps, not wanted, but I pretended not to notice anything amiss, and endured my position as well as I could. The doctor ignored my presence completely, addressing all his dull witticisms to Edna, who laughed at them as usual, doing her best, now and then, to drag me into the conversation. She could not keep any one mood for long, however, and before the end of the meal I flattered myself that she would, after all, prefer being with me alone; but the doctor's pop-eyes held her, and his interminable foolery kept her whole attention concentrated upon him, despite herself. Nothing at all was said about the telephoning.

Directly after luncheon was over the two went upstairs into the study, with-

out even the formality of an apology to me. As Leah was busy about her own work, I strolled out into the kitchen to see King. He was washing the dishes, and greeted me with his customary cryptic grin.

"Say, King," I said, "you got a joss in your room?"

His grin grew wider. "Yep!" he ejaculated, nodding.

"You no Christian, then? You not go to Sunday-school?"

"Aw, no good go to Sunday-school—I can talk Melican all light! Christian joss no good for Chinaman. You think so?"

"I guess you're right," I said. "But do you worship your joss? You burn punk-stick some time? You trim him up with paper flowers, maybe?"

He laughed to himself as if it were a great joke, but kept on washing his dishes like a machine. "You likee see my joss?" he said, looking back over his shoulder. "Heap good joss—velly old. I bling him from China."

"What d'you pray for, King?"

"Aw, some time one thing, some time other thing. I play for good luck, alle same Christian. You play, too?"

"Oh, sometimes," I said. "But go on, tell me, King. When do you pray? You pray today?"

He shook his head. "Aw, no; no play yet. Play all time at night."

"What did you ask for last night, then? Come on, tell me!"

"Aw, no, no!" He shook his head, still laughing sillily.

"Money, King? I'll bet you prayed for money!"

"Aw, no, no! I tell you. I play for Miss Fielding."

I had stumbled upon a live wire! Instantly I was aroused, and careful to say no tactless word. What I had already got from him was an extraordinary amount for a Chinese of his caste to discover to a white man. So I went wittfully to lead him on.

"That's good, King; I pray for Miss Fielding, too. I want her to get well. Don't you?"

"Yep. She good lady, you bet. Maybe she get well, I dunno."

"What you think the matter with her, King? I'm worried about her."

He emptied his dish-water out, and wiped his hands first. Then he stopped suddenly and said,

"Miss Fielding, she got one no-good debbil on inside. You know? Some time he heap bad, some time he keep still. Plenty people have debbil in China; all time go pliest, he dlive 'em away easy."

"The priest drives the devils away, King? How does he do it?"

"Oh, flighten debbil, tha's all. Stlike gong, burn fire-clackers, make all time heap loud noise and debbil go away flighten'."

"I wish Miss Fielding could be cured as easy as that, King!"

For the first time during the conversation his grin disappeared. He came up to me, gesticulating.

"You likee flighten away debbil? Maybe I help you sometime?"

"Could you do it?" I laughed.

"Sure! Aw! you no think so?"

He returned to wipe his dishes philosophically. I smiled at his earnestness and walked away.

I sat down in the library to wait till the doctor came down. I found that he would have to walk to the station, as Uncle Jerdon was away, and I determined to have another talk with him, if I could manage to see him alone. I had decided on a *coup d'état*.

In a half-hour they reappeared, Edna showing traces of heaviness about her eyes, as if she had been asleep. The doctor looked at his watch, and found that he had just time to walk to the train. I offered to accompany him, and, though he appeared surprised, he assented with a good grace. Edna did not care to go with us. It seemed to me that she not only perceived the antagonism between the doctor and me, but fostered it for her own ends. It was as if we were fighting for her and she had decided to let the best man win. So we left her and started out.

I began as soon as we were round the turn of the lane.

"Dr. Copin," I said, "I wish you'd

let me know exactly what Miss Fielding's condition is, and what hopes you have of her recovery."

"Did she ask you to interrogate me?" he asked, blandly.

"In a way, she did. But I do so, nevertheless, quite on my own responsibility, as a friend who is much interested in her case."

"Then I must decline to answer. You are aware, I suppose, that Miss Fielding has had her own reasons for not wishing the matter to be discussed?"

"I'm perfectly aware of that, but I think that, as I now know all the essential facts, it can't possibly matter to her. On the other hand, I can help, perhaps."

"I didn't know you were a specialist in nervous diseases—or even a psychologist," he answered in a sneering tone.

"I am neither," was my response, "but I have common sense enough to perceive that her trouble is approaching a crisis. That, in fact, is my sole justification for staying on here."

"Oh, if that's all, you can go any time. I'm quite able to cope with the situation, I assure you."

"Dr. Copin, I insist upon having a statement of what you are doing in this matter. I speak as the representative of Miss Fielding—the real Miss Fielding."

He turned to me now with his thin lips drawn back, showing his even line of false teeth, in a cruel, selfish smile. "Insist?" he repeated. "You have hardly that right, whatever Miss Fielding has said."

"I certainly do have that right!" I maintained.

He stopped in his tracks and confronted me. "Why?" he demanded.

The time had come for me to play my bluff.

"Because I am engaged to Miss Fielding!" I announced, curtly.

He scowled fiercely. "You are!" he retorted. "Very well, then, I have as good a right to refuse to answer you!"

It was my turn to say, "Why? What do you mean?"

"Because I am engaged to her myself. So there you are!" With that, he walked off, leaving me standing, staring at him. I was literally bluffed to a standstill. I watched him striding down the lane in silence. I was in a labyrinth of thought. Then I turned slowly back toward the house and prepared for war. I would have to get it out of Edna, or give up and confess myself defeated.

As I walked up the lane I heard a rustling in the bushes, and, peering through them, I saw Nokomis bounding along, her ears laid back, her brush trailing. She leaped down the bank a little way ahead of me and stood for a moment, pointing in the direction of the house. I called her, but she only turned her fine head for a moment, and then trotted on up the lane. I followed her leisurely, preparing for my cross-examination of Edna.

Just before I came to the turn, I heard a quick, sharp yelp, and a woman's shrill cry. Then a shot rang out, echoing against the hillside. I ran round the bend at full speed.

There was Edna, with a pistol smoking in her hand. In the path, in front of her, Nokomis lay dead. Leah, running up from the house, had stopped behind Edna, and stood, horror-stricken, afraid to move. It was like the scene of a play.

I strode up. "What's happened?" I demanded.

Edna dropped the pistol to her side and looked down at the collie angrily.

"Nokomis tried to bite me," she said. "But she'll never try it again! I always thought she was dangerous."

"Give me that revolver!" I said, sternly.

She met my look, shrinking a little, and handed over the weapon. I put it into my pocket. Leah retreated fearfully to the house.

First, I took Nokomis's body and carried it to a bed of ferns beside the path, patted her head and left her there till she could be buried. Then I took Edna's arm, gently, and led her away. She told me, a little frightened now at the impressiveness of my man-

ner, that she had met Nokomis suddenly, and, attempting to drive her away, the collie had snapped viciously at her. Edna had the revolver which she had taken from Leah earlier in the day, still in her jacket pocket, and, at the attack, had drawn it and fired immediately.

I had no reproaches for her—what was there to say? Even in speaking, she had recovered from her mood, and she became as blithe and inconsequent as if nothing had happened—the only effect apparent upon her was a whimsical pettishness at my implied rebuke. She began to attempt to cajole me, childishly, patting my hand, looking saucily up into my face and pretending a sort of arch depreciation of her temper. It was evident that she was not at all sorry for what she had done; in fact she seemed to be secretly pleased at her prowess, though she covered it with considerable guile.

All the rest of the afternoon she was in an excited frame of mind. She treated me with all her former *camaraderie*, but I could see that she was acting. It gave me a new insight into the rapidity of her development effected by the doctor's information. She was no longer a child; she was becoming complex, although still dominated by rapidly changing moods. A new phase had indubitably commenced; it was the sign, I feared, of a growing supremacy.

That evening she wheedled me with every art of the coquette. Her affability seemed to give the lie to the doctor's statement about their engagement, but it might well be true that she was playing him as audaciously as she was playing me. I did not, of course, ask her about it. It did not matter.

If I had needed to exercise my self-restraint on that other evening when she attempted to provoke me, it was much more necessary, now, for she had become less differentiated, intellectually from Joy; so much so, at least, as to permit me at times to give my imagination play, and fancy her, for the moment, the real Joy, my Joy in an alluring guise, tintured with wild-fire. The line of cleavage now was more

along moral lines. Edna's mind was evolving at the expense of her ethical nature. Her temptation was seductive and arrantly conceived to torment me; I was sure that it was intended to shake my allegiance to her rival self. It was like playing with edged tools to be alone with her. In her intervals of repose she fell so naturally into Joy's poses that it was disconcerting. It was like "The Faerie Queene" over again; like an errant knight, I was confronted by the image of my mistress so cunningly enchanted that I could not tell till she spoke that her body was obsessed by another spirit.

She asked me much about the day before, and about what she had done and said. As the evening wore on and she could not defeat my continual evasions, she began to grow sullen and reserved. Finally, she appeared to give it up, and went upstairs with a sarcastic emphasis to her "Good night, Prig!"

VI

NEXT morning I lay in bed for some time after I awoke, planning my day. If it were Joy who appeared, there were several things to be decided upon and accomplished; if Edna, a conflict was imminent, which caused me much anxiety. Queerly enough, the proposal I would have to make to Joy, seemed almost as if it would be an *ex post facto* agreement. I had already announced my engagement to the doctor, but I had not made my bluff without holding a pretty good hand. I couldn't doubt by this time, how Joy felt toward me.

At eight o'clock I heard the customary dialogue—Miss Fielding's door being still left ajar—but I noticed that her voice was quick and excited. Leah was called in immediately, and the two women seemed to have more than the usual amount of talk together.

Next, I heard the dogs barking in answer to their names; but there were only four replies to Joy's calls, today. Poor old Nokomis would never greet

her mistress again. Then the door was closed. She evidently did not wait to have breakfast, as usual, in her room, for, fifteen minutes later I heard her going downstairs.

Fearing that something was wrong, though I was sure, now, that it was Joy herself whom I had heard, I rose and dressed as quickly as I could. I found her in the library waiting for me.

She held a folded paper in her hand, as she sat by the window, looking out, listlessly. I bade her good morning; she looked up without a smile and silently handed me the paper. Unfolding it, I saw, written in a round, childish, vertical script, the words:

"I know you now—Cat!"

"I found this pinned to my pillow when I woke up," she said. "It's from Edna." Then a faint, dreamy smile softened her lips as she said, "You see, even to her, I am the White Cat!"

"How d'you know it's from Edna?"

"It's her handwriting. She writes very differently from me."

I looked at it, wondering. It was the first shot in the battle.

"You see, she has found out. Her eyes are opened," Joy said.

"Yes. I was going to tell you about it today. I suspected it yesterday, and it has proved true. It complicates things immensely."

"Leah has told me that I struck her, too. Think of it! It makes me positively faint. What horrible part of me has come to the surface in Edna? What undiscovered self is it that is torturing me so? It's a hideous revelation. It shows how depraved I must be, at heart."

"It isn't you!" I declared. "It's another woman, quite. It's only you in the sense that it would be you if you were intoxicated, or if you were dreaming, or insane. You mustn't think of yourself as in any way responsible."

"Then of course she's not, either?"

"No more than a child, or an idiot. She uses your body and your mind, but she hasn't, so to speak, the use of your moral scruples. She's a disin-

tegrated self, imperfectly functioned. All the same we have, of course, to treat her as quite another person. And the crisis is approaching, I think, when we'll have to act. I don't intend to spare her. We must use force if necessary."

"How does she know about me, after so long an ignorance?" Joy inquired.

I told her what I had heard at the telephone. She could scarcely credit my testimony.

"If the doctor is definitely leagued with Edna what can we do? He has all his science and Edna's active help. I'm lost if he's really against me! I can't be sure that the doctor has deliberately played me false. There may be some mistake."

"I think I can prove that to you," I said, "but I have a great deal to say to you first."

I think she knew, then; I think she hoped to hear what I was going to say, for she gave me her hand, and smiled up at me as she rose to go in to breakfast. We sat down with Leah at the table.

I had taken it for granted that Leah had told Joy everything that had happened the day before, and so, not wishing to grieve her further, I took care to say nothing about Nokomis. But the swelling on Leah's cheek could not be so easily ignored, and several times I saw the tears come into Joy's eyes at the sight of it.

While we were there the clock struck half-past eight. At the sound Joy's face changed—an expression of abstraction came into it. It was as if she were trying to recall something that eluded her memory. Then she half-rose, like a somnambulist.

"I think I'll run upstairs and telephone the doctor," she said, without looking at me.

"Why should you?" I asked, much surprised, after the way we had talked.

"I don't know," she said, vaguely, looking about the room. "Oughtn't he to know how I treated Leah? Perhaps he can prevent that, in some way."

"You'd better not, Joy," I said.

She stood for a moment irresolute, and then, as if urged by some extraneous impulse she moved a little nearer the door.

"I just want to find out if he's coming down today," she said automatically.

I jumped up and touched her shoulder.

"Please don't telephone to Dr. Copin—you *mustn't*!" I said with decision.

"Oh," she said, wide-eyed, coming to herself a little. "There's a reason?"

"There's a good reason!" I exclaimed.

She moved back, as if still opposing some force that was drawing her out of the room, sat down limply, half-rose again, resealed herself.

"Resist!" I said to her.

Leah looked on without a word, breathless, her lips open.

Joy looked madly at me. "What is it, Chester? Tell me!"

"It's only a post-hypnotic suggestion, that's all. You must defeat it."

Then she literally shook herself free from the obsession. "Oh, why am I tortured and racked so!" she exclaimed. "Can't I be permitted to be myself when I *am* myself? Isn't it bad enough to be robbed of myself half the time without his imposing his will on me now? Why is he doing this?"

"That's just what I want to find out," I said. "The important thing is not to give in to him. His experiments may possibly be justified, but I don't think so. We certainly have good ground to suspect him. Have you quite got over your desire to telephone?"

"Yes—but it's queer—I can still think of reasons why I might, though of course I agree with you that it's not best to. You see, I've only given up to you instead of to him. I'm quite in the dark, now; I seem to have no will of my own. I can't judge, I can't understand even my own impulses. Well, if I'm blind you and Leah will lead me, won't you?"

She reached over and took Leah's hand affectionately.

When we finished breakfast, Joy and I went into the library. There was an old, gilt-framed, concave mirror there, over the fireplace, that gathered in and focused on its disk the whole room in one compact, shadowy scene. Joy went up to it.

"Aren't we queer and strange in there?" she said. "It's so dim and ghostly; when I look up and see anyone in it, it always seems to me like some scene of Maeterlinck or Sudermann."

She walked over to another glass, more formal and more true, and looked at herself intently.

"Look at the lines about my eyes! They weren't there a year ago! My whole face has changed. . . I have grown ten years older this last month. . . My eyes themselves are different. . . There's another wrinkle. . . I wish my eyebrows were even. . . I believe my nose is one-sided, too. . ."

Her voice died away. I looked up and saw her gazing into the mirror with a strange intentness. Her brow was puckered into a frown. Suddenly her hand went to her heart with a gesture of horror.

"Oh!" she cried, and hid her face in her hands.

"What is it?" I asked.

"The doctor!" she exclaimed, shuddering.

"Tell me!" I insisted.

Instead, she sprang up and began to walk up and down the room, wringing her hands. "It's awful; it's all confused in my mind, like a dream—but I seem to remember things that never happened at all. Oh, *did* they ever happen?" she turned to demand of me in despair.

"That's what I want you to tell me."

She dropped into her chair again and began to cry—"Oh, I can't tell you! I can't! It never happened, I'm sure! What does it mean, Chester?"

"It's probably what happened here yesterday—to Edna—that you remember, Joy."

"Oh, how dares he treat her so, then? It comes back to me in scraps and shreds of scenes. Oh, what a cad he

must be! And what a woman she must be, to allow him—oh, I can't stand it! Why did you make me remember? How can I ever look anyone in the face again?"

She threw herself into the cushions on the window-seat and burst into tears. There was but one way to restore her self-respect, and I went over to her and took her hand. At first she pulled it away, but I persisted.

"Dear Joy," I said, "don't grieve so, for it's all right. It was Edna, not you, you know, and Edna's not responsible for what she does, I'm sure. Don't cry, for I have something to say to you, now, that you must answer."

She looked at me through her tears, and waited.

"I want you to marry me, Joy."

"Oh, please *don't!*" she exclaimed.

"Marry you? How can I listen to such a thing, after what has happened? Oh, no, *no!*"

"It's partly on account of that that I ask you now. I want to help you, and I can help you so much more if we are engaged. I want the right to help you."

"Oh, it's only pity that makes you ask me. It's only to protect me! Never, never!"

"It isn't that," I protested. "I love you, Joy—I have loved you for a long time, and loving you, I want to save you not only for your sake, but for my own as well. I want you for my wife, Joy! Don't you love me?"

Her tears had ceased and now she looked at me with bright eyes that burned softly.

"My dear," she said, "of course I love you! I think I have loved you ever since that first day you came here. But for that very reason I must say no. How could I ever drag you into this wretched trouble?"

"Oh, I'm in it all over, whether or no," I said. "Do you think I could ever leave you now? Were I only your friend, even, I'd have to stay with you; but I'm your lover, Joy! I'm most desperately in love with you. And I intend to have you, too! No matter what you say, no matter what

you do, you're mine, and you can't get away from me. So you'd better just say 'yes' this moment."

She sat up and looked at me tenderly. "Don't speak of it again—not till all this problem is settled at least. It's impossible. Do you think I could think of it after what has happened, after I've found out what I really am? If I am ever released from this spell—if I can ever forget what I've just found out, it will be time enough to speak of love. But not now, I beg of you. I'm the White Cat!"

"I've already told the doctor that we're engaged," I said.

"You've told the doctor? How could you?"

I repeated our conversation in the lane. Her momentary resentment at me died away at hearing the doctor's own announcement.

"Then perhaps Edna is in love with him, after all! That would account for much, and excuse everything, perhaps." She drew a sigh of relief at the thought of this palliation.

"I don't think she is, but she might be willing to marry him to get her freedom," I offered.

"But then, if Edna is in love, I have still less right to let you propose to me. Why, just think of it—it's incredible! If they're engaged——"

"They're not engaged, I'm sure," I declared.

"It makes no difference—she may care for him more than you think. It's fearful! I can't talk about it!"

"But she *can't* marry him! We must prevent that! Think of the horror of that possibility!"

I had small need to appeal to her imagination. Her mind was already whirling with the possibilities of such a situation. She stared at me, dazed, speechless, her eyes filled with terror. Then she collapsed and fell into my arms.

"Oh, Chester, what shall I do? Take care of me! I'm so frightened!"

"You must listen to me, Joy," I said. "I love you so that my heart will break if you don't consent and let me help you. You must be my wife, and then

we can defy them and fight it out together."

She started up with a new thought. "Oh, hasn't Edna a right to *her* love, too? Won't it be as bad for her, possibly, if I consent? How can I force her to suffer that! How can I bear to think of your being with her while I'm wandering, lost, eclipsed? Oh, don't you see how shockingly impossible the whole thing is? We can neither of us dare to love. We have no right even to think of it! How can you suggest it? It's unthinkable!"

"But you love me?" I asked.

She offered me her lips for the first time, and clung to me, trembling.

"Then, nothing is impossible. We'll wait a while, and see. But at least, so far as the doctor is concerned, I can't afford to be stultified. You'll not repudiate my announcement. You'll admit it to him, if he asks? I must have that weapon against him."

She turned it over in her mind. "I'll not deny it," she said, finally, "but you must not consider it a promise. It's simply too ghastly to think of!"

I had gained that much, at any rate, and though my heart sank at the thought of the possibilities our words had pictured, I still hoped to be inspired to some successful plan for attack and defense. I knew that Joy loved me—that was everything. It made me bolder and more confident. So I put the horrors from me and thought only of our love.

She turned suddenly toward me and said, "What would you do for me, Chester?"

"Anything, except give you up!"

"Remember the White Cat!" she said. "Would you do what she asked the Prince to do?"

"What do you mean?"

She spoke deliberately. "Conceive, if you can, our being beaten in the end. Conceive that Edna might marry the doctor—and then think of me!"

"I'll prevent that!" I said, through my teeth.

"You may not be able to prevent it, except in one way."

I understood. "If I ever believe that *that* is the only way to prevent it—I promise to help you."

"I may be able to do it alone; of course I shall try. But if I haven't the means, the opportunity, you must promise to help me find them."

"I promise!" I repeated.

She tossed her head back with her old gesture.

Then I said, "Joy, all this is unnecessary; though I've promised. If you'll only marry me now—if you'll even consent to an engagement, it will enable me to defy the doctor and prevent his coming here."

"Oh, I cannot, I cannot!" she cried. "You know why as well as I! It's too awful! I love you—that must be enough for the present."

She arose and added, "Let's go outdoors and take a walk. Perhaps the air and the sun will do me good, and afterward we can think it over and decide how to manage the doctor. I'll just run upstairs and change my clothes and then we'll try the sun-cure."

As she went up to her room, I walked out into the kitchen to talk to King while I waited for her. He was busy at the stove, but welcomed me with his usual meaningless grin.

"Well, King," I said, "I guess your joss is pretty good, after all. Miss Fielding is better today."

"H'm!" He shook his head. "Debbil come plenty time more!"

"Perhaps we can pray him away," I suggested.

He dropped his spoon and came up and took my arm.

"You likee come lookee my joss?"

I assented, amused at his insistence, and he led me out into the yard where, beside the stable, he had a little shed. It was filled with the odor of burning sandalwood. In his room, by the upper end of his cot, was his porcelain joss, a horrible-faced deity. Long placards of red paper containing Chinese writing were hung about, and there were paper flowers, dusty and fly-specked upon the stand. At the feet of the idol was a bowl full of ashes in which were many joss-sticks. Three

were lighted, the others had burned out. There was also a small lamp, with a lighted wick floating on the nut-oil. I inspected it all very seriously.

King rummaged in his trunk, and soon, grinning, beckoned to me. I went over to him and saw, in the tray, a large, ferocious-looking mask such as are used in the Chinese theatres and at the Feasts of the Dead. Beside it was a pair of huge brass cymbals and a snake-skin tom-tom. King held up the mask.

"Oh, you used to be an actor, eh?" I said.

He grinned and held the thing in front of his face. It certainly was horrible. He took up the cymbals and struck one clang. Then he put them away.

"Heap good for debbil! Dlive him away quick!" he said. "Maybe some time I tly him! You think so?"

I laughed, and went back to the library, where Joy was already waiting for me.

She was standing by the window-seat, looking out, putting in a hat-pin, lost in thought, when I entered. My footsteps made no noise on the heavy rug, and I thoughtlessly touched her on the shoulder before she was aware of my approach. Absorbed in her trouble, unstrung, the surprise startled her with a sudden irrational terror; she leaped away as if from the touch of a snake. Then, seeing me, she dropped upon the window-seat, her hand on her heart.

"Oh, you frightened me so! You see how nervous I am. I didn't hear you. I'm a goose!"

I took no step toward her, but stood there gazing at her. A sudden idea had come to me at sight of her fear, and immediately a plan was unrolled before me, a perfected thing, a solution of the problem, perhaps. At my fixed, stony attitude, however, she took a new alarm and cried out:

"What is it, Chester? What is it?"

"Wait a moment," I said, quietly, "let me think it out." My tone reassured her, but she was still agitated as she watched me while I turned it over

in my mind. Then I took a seat beside her.

"It's a desperate chance, but it may work."

"You have a plan?" she asked, anxiously.

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"I can't tell you. It will be much better for you not to know."

"Oh, I'm afraid not to know! It's dreadful to be conspiring against that poor girl. It's like plotting a murder. I can't bear the thought of it. You must tell me!"

"It will be hard enough for me—you could not stand it," I said. "You'll have to trust me, for I shall save you in spite of yourself. But I can't share this with you."

"You'll not injure her, Chester?"

"How can I, when it will be your own face that I shall confront? It will be your own voice that I shall hear. I wonder if I can do it!"

"Oh, I *must* know, or I won't consent! What right have we to destroy her, after all? She has a right, perhaps, to her life!"

"Joy," I said, "you must think of it as a dream, as I said. In our dreams we suffer and enjoy, but so long as there is no bridge between that and our waking state, it need not matter to us. What must be done is no more than a surgical operation. It will restore you, I think, to health."

"But what of her?"

"She'll merely disappear. She'll take her place on the map again and join the rest of you."

"You won't tell me?"

"I can't!"

She arose proudly. "Then I do not consent," she declared. "I can suffer still. I'll summon new reserves of strength and I'll fight it out as it has begun. I'll forswear happiness, love, peace. I'll accept my fate—until I can stand it no longer. Then, I have my own remedy and I shall not be afraid to adopt it. There's always *that* way out! No, I'm stronger than you think, and it's quite settled. Now come outdoors and let's get some fresh

air. It's like a haunted house in here."

I tried no longer to persuade her, but I had already decided that I would put my plan through without her consent, if necessary. It happened, however, that this course was not necessary.

We went out into the sunshine and the fresh air and the perfume of June roses. In front of the house she stopped and called the collies. They came trooping about her.

"Where's Nokomis?" she asked. "Hasn't Nokomis come back yet? That's queer!"

I saw, then, that she had not been told. It was shocking to have to inflict this new blow upon her after all she had been through, but it could do no good to conceal the fact any longer. As she turned to go round to the stable, I took her hand.

"Send the dogs back!" I said.

She did so, with a question in her eyes. I took her arm and led her down toward the turn of the lane.

"Nokomis will never come back, Joy," I said.

"Why?" she exclaimed. Then she saw the answer in my eyes, and she grasped my arm as if she were about to fall.

"Oh, don't say—Nokomis isn't dead?" she whispered.

"It was my fault, Joy; I should have had her taken away out of danger. But I was too late."

I took her to the bed of ferns and pointed to the dead collie still lying there.

She ran to the spot and looked, aghast. Then, dropping to the ground, she took Nokomis's head tenderly and laid it in her lap.

"Oh, Nokomis, Nokomis!" she mourned, her little hand smoothing the ruffled neck affectionately.

I told her how it had happened, and she gazed at me, dry-eyed, till I had finished. Then she put the collie's beautiful head down, straightened out the body and finally broke into sobs that shook her whole body. I let her cry it out.

She looked up at me, her face drawn and tear-stained.

"Poor old Nokomis!" was all she could say.

I took her hand and helped her up; then led her gently away, as I had led Edna away only yesterday. It was the same hand I took, but it was so cold and weak! It was the same face I saw, but it was so distorted with sadness! It was the same voice I heard, but then it had been proud and careless—now it was so tremulously stricken!

"To think that I should have killed Nokomis!" she said.

"It wasn't you, dear!"

"How do I know? If I could be sure!"

Then she wheeled about and faced me. She put both her hands on my shoulders and clung desperately to me.

"Chester," she cried, "take me, if you will—if you dare! I don't know any more what's right and what's wrong. The White Cat is blind! I must have you—I want you! I can't live without your help! I'll give it all up, now, and let you act; for I shall die anyway, if such a thing as this should happen again. Next time it may be Leah—it may be even you! If you can save me, I'll marry you. I consent to the engagement—I'll say 'yes' with all my heart, with all gratitude and all love. It's wrong and cowardly, I'm afraid, but you and Leah are all I have."

I kissed her on the lips, and put on her finger the little old seal ring I wore.

"Then we must be married," I said.

She freed herself and took a step back.

"Oh, no! Not yet!" she said, sadly. "No, not even yet! When you have tried your plan—and I give you leave, now—when you have succeeded in freeing me—then we will be married. Oh, you must free me first—I can't share you with Edna—you must destroy her, before she destroys me!"

"Very well" I said. "I can't urge you further, though I am afraid there is a great risk in delay. I must

go up to town first, and I shall have to leave you here, of course. I doubt if I could manage Edna, should she appear tomorrow while we're in town. But I shall return as soon as possible—tomorrow at the latest. Now I must get ready to take the one o'clock train up."

As we sat in the library waiting for Uncle Jerdon, Joy took up the crystal prism and watched, abstractedly, the rainbow spot upon the ceiling.

"You're leaving for the second time," she said. "It's the end of the second quest, isn't it? I'm afraid the White Cat has no piece of cloth fine enough to give her Prince, though."

I pointed up at the streak of prismatic color.

"There's a veil of beauty as wonderful as that the king's son brought home. Surely it's fine and subtle enough to pass through the eye of a cambric needle!"

She handed the crystal to me with a tender smile.

"Keep it, Son of a King! And, if you win me, I'll see you clad in those rainbow hues all my life long!"

At one o'clock I was in the train on the way to town, deliberating my plan and arranging for the preparations I must make.

PART THIRD

I

I STARTED back for Midmeadows at ten o'clock the next day. It was a fine breezy morning and the countryside was full of odors. The sky was an intense blue, abounding in great rolling white clouds which spotted it like the continents and islands of a huge map upon which some Titanic Napoleon was continually carving and remodeling new realms and empires of the firmament.

I paid less attention to them, however, than I did to the mental empire it was now my purpose to overthrow. If thunder and lightning could burst the cloud that kept the sunshine from

my sweetheart's life, I was determined to conjure that storm.

I had, during my few hours in town, consulted a medical friend upon Joy's case, and while he gave no professional approval to my project, he had not denied the possibility of its being effective in producing a cure. Such conditions as Miss Fielding's were by no means rare, but they had been so little studied, except phenomenally, that there was no authorized course of treatment known. Each had to be dealt with according to its especial characteristics, and according to circumstances. He had talked to me a good deal concerning "subliminal selves," of the theory of "successive planes of consciousness" and of "isolated personalities," ending with the statement that, so far as any definite knowledge of the psychology of multiple or dissociated personality was concerned, even doctors were the merest laymen. Of its actual rationale we knew virtually nothing, though in some cases the disintegrated personalities had been synthesized into a normal self by means of hypnotic treatment.

I had left Joy herself, yesterday, and, in view of her accelerated alternations, due to the doctor's influence, I had every reason to expect to find Edna today in control. My chief hope was that she and Leah were still upon amicable terms, and that they would be alone in the house. But there had been time for many things to have happened, and I awaited the news with considerable anxiety, though braced for any ordeal that might come—except, of course, what did come. I dismissed the carriage at the lane and walked the rest of the way.

There was no sign of life outside the house; I went up to the front door and knocked. It was some time before my summons was answered, and then, to my dismay, by Dr. Copin. This was worse than I had feared.

"Oh, how d'you do, Castle?" he said, making no move to let me in.

"I'm down again, you see. I believe Miss Fielding is expecting me," I said, as coolly as I could.

He stood with his hand on the door, defending the entrance. "I'm very sorry to say that Miss Fielding is not well today, and she can't see you."

"Can't see me! Why, that's impossible. She knows perfectly well that I was to return today!"

"She's said nothing about it to me if she does. At any rate, she's in no condition to see anybody, and I must ask you to leave."

"Would you mind telling her that I'm here?" I said.

"I'll speak to her, if you like, though I don't particularly care to disturb her at present. Wait a moment, and I'll see how she is."

He shut the door and, I think, locked it. I waited on the step, hoping for a sight of Leah, and trying to make up my mind what to do if I were refused admittance. I might attempt to enter by force, but, with the doctor there, I could not possibly put my project into action. He finally reappeared with a long face.

"Miss Fielding begs to be excused," he announced.

"It's most extraordinary; I must insist on seeing her!" I cried.

"You certainly don't wish to force yourself in where you're not wanted?" he insinuated.

"If I were sure I wasn't wanted, no. But I don't believe you took my message in to her at all."

"I'll accept that insult, Mr. Castle, and we'll settle it at some other time. Just now, I must ask you to leave immediately. You may happen to recall what I told you the last time we met. As Miss Fielding's fiancé it is not only my right but my duty to see that you go."

"And do you recall my own words on that occasion? I have as good a right to insist upon entering!" I maintained.

"Well, well, this is no time to discuss that, for my presence is needed in the house," he replied. "As I am engaged to Miss Fielding, No. 2, if you please to accept that designation, and, as it is No. 2 who is at present receiving me, you'll perhaps see the force of my claim."

It was infamous to have to stand bickering with him, and, as it could do no good to enact a scene, I turned away, lifted my hat and bade him "good morning!" He bowed, shut the green door, and this time I distinctly heard the key turn in the lock.

I was for a moment at a loss how to proceed, but walked slowly down the lane. At the bend, I looked back and saw Leah at an upper window gesticulating to me. I stopped and watched her.

From her signs I gathered that she wished to meet me, and, being careful to make no sign in return, I passed out of sight and waited. It was fifteen minutes before she appeared, coming through the underbrush, having made a detour from the back of the house to escape observation.

"Oh, Mr. Castle," she said breathlessly, "it's dreadful! The doctor has been down here since early in the forenoon, and he has been with Edna all the time, shut up in the library."

"What are they doing? Could you see or hear?"

"Oh, what *aren't* they doing!" she exclaimed, turning away. "It's unbearable. I don't see how you can stand it!"

"I *can't* stand it! I won't stand it! I'll break down the door if they won't let me in!" I broke out. "I'll kill him!"

Leah caught my hand and stopped me. "It's no use," she said, "Edna herself won't let you in, I'm afraid. She's different this morning. I never saw her so much under his influence. Usually she jokes with him and teases him in all sorts of ways, but today she's more quiet and determined."

"Has she treated you badly?"

"No—if it were only that, I wouldn't care. It's something more dangerous. She's crafty and secret. It's sinister. It makes my flesh crawl!"

"Do you know how long the doctor will stay?"

"He's going back this afternoon, I think. That's why he's working so hard with her, I suppose. She's like a bird with a serpent—she's fascinated by him."

"What did he say to her—did you hear?"

"He has been hypnotizing her. I heard him say, '*You will be Edna, Edna, Edna!*'—he repeated it over and over."

"You must go back to the house, then, immediately. You mustn't be missed on any account. Do your best to placate her and avoid trouble. I'll watch in the old cabin till he goes past. As soon as he's out of the way, I'll come."

She was off on the instant through the wood toward the back of the house. I walked down the lane and along the highroad a little way, to the deserted cabin. Here I took my post behind a window and waited patiently.

A couple of hours went by. It was an eternity to me. A hundred times I decided to go and break down the door of the house and have it out with the doctor. I had a couple of revolvers in my bag and the temptation to shoot him on sight was strong. When I thought of what was probably going on in the house—of Joy's body, perhaps at his mercy—it was all I could do to remember that my intervention at this moment would ruin all hopes of her eventual release from his power. I bore it for her sake, with my teeth gritted, thinking mad thoughts.

At last I heard the rattle of wheels and saw the carriage approach. Uncle Jerdon was driving; the doctor, smoking a cigar, was laughing complacently. I shrank out of sight till they had passed. Then I left the cottage and ran up the lane.

Edna was sitting outside on the doorstep as I approached, but, on seeing me, she rose and went quickly inside, shutting the door. She was indeed different, if she failed to welcome me. My heart fell, but I went up to the door and knocked. No answer. I knocked again, and after a long wait, Leah appeared.

By her first glance at me and an almost imperceptible nod of her head toward the library door, I knew that Edna was near by, watching and listening. I was not surprised, therefore, when, in

answer to my greeting and question, Leah replied:

"Miss Fielding is sorry that she can't see you today. She's not well. She says that she sent you that word before."

"Mayn't I even speak to her for a moment?" I asked.

"She begs you to excuse her, Mr. Castle." Leah's eyes gave me another sign.

"Very well, then; tell her I'm much disappointed, but I won't trouble her again." I added a gesture in the direction of the lane and walked away without looking back. I felt that Edna was watching from the library window. Leah closed the door.

I went a little way down the lane, searching my mind for some means of combating this unlooked-for contretemps. I had discovered a possible way out before Leah appeared, a half-hour later.

"Oh, I'm afraid she'll miss me this time!" she said, her eyes wide and frightened. "I took my chances though, and you must be quick. What shall I do?"

"I am going over to the Harbor," I said. "I shall be back, probably, in about an hour and a half, and I'll wait here for you. You must find some excuse for coming again. Then I'll give you your instructions. If anything happens that positively prevents your coming, hang a towel out of my window. That's all now; go back!"

She flew back to the house, and I started for the village where I knew that there was an apothecary's shop. In forty minutes I had, with some difficulty, procured what I wanted, a bottle of chloroform. But it was two hours before I got back to Midmeadows. Approaching the house, and keeping carefully hidden by the trees, I saw that there was no signal at the window, and knew that I could expect Leah. I retired a few yards beyond the curve and waited for her.

It was by this time about half-past six o'clock in the evening, and it was still light and warm, though the shadows were long about the old house. I

had done a deal of waiting that day, and it had begun to tell on me. It was a great relief when Leah appeared, looking about anxiously. I came out from hiding.

"How goes it?" I asked.

"All right, but she's been restless and fretful. I wouldn't have been able to get off possibly, if she hadn't decided to take a walk before supper. She's gone up over the hill. What are you going to do, Mr. Castle?"

I handed her the bottle, and as she caught sight of the label her hand shook so that she nearly dropped it.

"What we'll have to do is to put her to sleep, so that Joy may return. I don't know, of course, whether it will work or not, but it's the only way I can think of. Have the bottle ready, hidden in the library, and wait till she sits down to supper. Then go in quickly, soak your handkerchief with the chloroform, come up behind her, and hold it to her face tightly—with all your strength, for she'll struggle—till her head drops. You must act quickly and firmly. If she has the slightest suspicion of anything, you'll fail, and we're lost. As soon as you've laid her on the floor, call me. I'll be right outside, ready to come in."

"But King?" she asked, trying hard to control her excitement.

"If King sees you, or attempts to interfere, tell him that I am trying to drive out Miss Fielding's devil. But he won't, I think. Is Uncle Jerdon there?"

"No, he's gone after the cow—he won't come into the kitchen till after seven o'clock, when he's through with his milking."

"Very well, then. Can you do it? Have you the nerve?"

"Yes. I'll do anything to bring back Miss Joy!"

She held herself erect, her lips compressed, looking at me bravely, though immensely agitated. I knew that whatever the struggle might cost her, I could rely upon her to rise to the situation. I sent her away with a final word of encouragement.

I waited some ten minutes more; then cautiously approached the house,

went close to the library window, and looked in.

It was not long before I saw Miss Fielding enter from the hall door, take up a paper, look it over listlessly, and then, at the sound of King's gong, go into the dining-room and take her seat. This was just outside my range of vision, but occasionally as she leaned back I caught sight of the back of her head. Leah passed and repassed several times, waiting upon her. I watched in an excited suspense.

I had begun to fear that the girl had lost her courage, when I saw her suddenly dart into the library, take the bottle from behind the books in one of the cases, and open it, drenching her handkerchief. At that very moment Edna must have called; for a moment I saw her head, as she turned round to look into the library. Then it disappeared again. Leah stole back into the dining-room, with the handkerchief held behind her.

She stopped back of Edna's chair. Then her right hand flew round with the handkerchief, and her left covered it. There was a short hard struggle, as Edna tried to free herself, but Leah held firm, crouching behind her mistress, tense and determined.

I waited for no more, but ran to the front door, through the library and into the dining-room.

Miss Fielding sat huddled into her chair, limp, inert, her arms hanging at her sides. Leah still stood behind her, staring, her eyes showing the whites above her pupils, her lips parted. She remained as if transfixed at the sight of what she had done.

I seized the unconscious form, and taking it up in my arms, bore it into the library, and laid it upon the couch in the window. Leah followed, without a word, still staring stupidly. I thrust her, then, into a chair, fearing that she might faint.

Then I stooped over Miss Fielding, calling, "Joy! Joy! Joy!"

II

I CALLED her name, involuntarily,

I suppose, yet there was in my motive, too, a dim idea that the suggestion might in some way influence her to awaken as Joy, rather than as Edna. I did my best, meanwhile, to assist her to revive, fanning her with a newspaper and chafing her hands.

Long before she came to herself, however, there began a convulsive struggle that was one of the most terrible things I had to witness in all my experience with her. It was as if her two selves were fighting for supremacy, for the possession of her body, which was their battle-field. I could only wait, helplessly, for that fierce struggle gradually to expend itself in tremblings and in sighs, while I called her again and again, now with a definite idea of the hypnotic suggestion. The conflict seemed to go on for a long, long time, though in point of fact it lasted, I think, only a few minutes. At the end, she drew a long, deep breath, relaxed, and opened her eyes. Almost immediately she was overcome by a violent nausea, and, attending to her and soothing her, it was some time before we knew with whom we had to deal. Her first words reassured me.

"Chester!" she exclaimed, "you've come back! I'm so glad, but I'm terrified—what has happened?"

I kissed her, kneeling on the floor beside her, stroking her hand. "Don't worry, dear," I said, "it's all right now."

She started up with a glad look on her face, misinterpreting my words.

"Oh, is it finished, then? Have we won? Is Edna driven away forever?"

I had to tell her that it was not yet even begun, but that, God willing, I should soon be ready to put my plan to the test. She was disheartened and discouraged at that; it was as if she had gone through an unsuccessful operation, she was so exhausted and fearful, but in the end, I succeeded in reassuring her somewhat, and she was restored to calmness and courage to bear the suspense. As soon as she felt better we went outdoors for a while, and the fresh, cool air brought back her spirits. There I told her just what had

happened, and what we had to expect. Then, as I had eaten nothing since morning, I went back with her to the dining-room and we had supper with Leah.

"Chester," she said, "you've said enough to make me afraid of what you intend to do. I can't yet be sure that we have the right to destroy Edna. And I must be surer that Dr. Copin has betrayed me. I've known him too long to let him go without proving it. I must see him and have a talk with him first; then, if I am thoroughly convinced, you may go ahead. But I want to know just what it is you intend to do."

There, at least, I stood firm. "I hope you'll never find out," I said. "I intend to cut out the cancer—that's enough for you to know. But, as to the doctor, I'm positively afraid to trust you with him. And yet, it would be well to know just what he's up to. He may come tomorrow morning, too, which will prevent my doing anything, whether it's you or Edna who is here. And I can't risk the chance of being interrupted. He may not come, however, as he'll naturally expect you to be here tomorrow, unless Edna's making faster progress than she has heretofore. And even if I could put you to sleep now, Uncle Jerdon's being in the house will prevent my acting."

It was here that Leah put in the first suggestion that she had volunteered.

"Miss Joy," she said, "I have an idea how you might find out what you want to know, and perhaps the doctor's plans as well, if you'd consent to do it. I don't know whether you'll think it's right or not—I've been trying to decide for myself, but I can't."

"Let's have it, at any rate," I said. "We've left right and wrong so far behind, now, that they're quite out of sight."

"If Leah has even thought of it enough to propose it, I'll take my chances on its being justifiable," Joy added.

"Here it is, then," said Leah. "You want to know what the doctor is doing with Edna and to Edna, don't you?"

"That's it," said Joy.

"Then why not pretend to be Edna when he comes?"

"By Jove!" I cried, "there's an ideal!"

"But I couldn't possibly do it!" Joy objected.

Leah explained further. "Mr. Castle and I will teach you. We have all night before us, and we'll have to stay up, anyway, to make sure that it is you who meets the doctor. During that time you can learn your part. It will be hard work, but I know you can do it."

"It will at least keep us awake." Joy smiled at last.

"And then, early in the morning, you, as Edna, can telephone to him and ask him to come down."

"He'll come," I said. "He'll be only too glad to find that Edna has had two days running."

Joy began to enter into the humor of the situation. "I'll not have to make up for the part, at least, shall I? And Edna's costumes will fit me. But do you think I can really do it?"

I was convinced that she could. "When you think that he will be predisposed to find you Edna, and how little cause he has to suspect such impersonation, and moreover how much more like you Edna is becoming, I think that there's very little risk," I said. "The best part of the plan is that after it's over the doctor is likely to go back and he'll be safely out of the way for my experiment."

"Oh, your experiment! How it terrifies me! What are we doing to that poor girl? What possible crime am I consenting to?" Joy broke down again.

Leah put her hand on Joy's arm and looked at her. "You'll do it for my sake, Miss Joy?" she pleaded. I knew well enough that she was not urging her own danger, despite her words. She was desirous only of Joy's peace—but her words had their effect.

"And for mine," I saw fit to add. The double appeal stilled Joy's protest.

We began, therefore, to instruct Joy in her part, and I think that she learned

more of her secondary self that night than she had known in all the rest of her life put together. It was not easy for her, at first, to abandon herself to the character, and assume the *gaucherie* that was typical of Edna. It was hardest of all to do what, indeed, I was loath to teach her, the little coquetties and familiarities which I imagined Edna to be in the habit of lavishing upon the doctor. But there was a humor, as well as a pathos, in the play, and occasionally the fun of it overthrew our seriousness.

So we went over and over the plot that night. Edna's languishing glances, Edna's awkward poses and active gestures, Edna's quick speech and obvious sallies, her impatient, pettish whims, all were rehearsed. Joy, becoming gradually interested in doing her best, threw herself into the attempt. Her mimicry of Edna was a strangely confusing sight—it was like one mirror reflected in another. I took the doctor's part, going through the motions of hypnotizing her, teaching her how to resist while simulating sleep, how to reply, how to awaken from the trance. I prepared her for every complication that I could think of, not forgetting Edna's characteristic treatment of Leah—and I think that this part of her acting did more than anything else, through her indignation, to stimulate her to do her best on the morrow.

Besides all this, she was to do whatever occurred to her at the moment, taking her cue from the doctor. She had, I impressed upon her, always the resource at hand of a pretended fainting fit, after which she might plausibly awaken in her real character as Joy. In any case, I surmised that her failure to enact the part consistently would be attributed by him to her primary self's partial projection into consciousness. And, after all, there were, of course, many points of resemblance between the two women, and with moderate care he should never suspect that she was feigning. It would scarcely have been possible for Edna to have taken the character of Joy.

It was nearly dawn before we felt

that we had gone far enough to be willing to risk her facility; and then, to freshen ourselves up, we went outdoors. The air was cool and invigorating; it was a beautiful night of stars and cloud. About the house the trees waved and rustled. The mass of trees across the garden was black in shadow. I smelt mint mingled with violets.

I took her arm, but it was she who guided me through the obscurity, knowing every inch of the way through long acquaintance. The dogs awoke and growled as we passed the stable, but instantly relapsed into silence as if aware of the presence of friends. A horse whinnied in his stall. We climbed the hill, Joy feeling for the concavity of the path with sensitive feet and leading me on; and at the top, we sat down, wrapped a shawl about our shoulders and waited for the day to break. We could hear the dogs barking far away. The second crowing of cocks sent challenges from one distant farm to another; infinitely remote a railway whistle sounded. After an hour the twittering of birds began, at first in occasional chirps, and finally in a chorus of matutinal gossip. The sky in the east grew pink, then, through red and orange and yellow, to a pale straw color. The limb of the sun pushed through the sea, freed itself from the horizon and floated up and up, flooding the country with light.

We walked back to the house, rejuvenated by the fresh air, and had our baths and hot coffee which Leah had ready for us. Joy was full of spirit and courage. The lines about her eyes were softened and her whole figure and bearing expressed determination. At eight o'clock she said:

"Well, let's ring up the curtain. I must begin the play. It's time to telephone. I'm going to tell the first lie I've told, I think, for months. You've no idea how unnecessary it has been down here. I'm afraid I've almost forgotten how to be a woman."

She got the doctor, and after a short conversation, he promised to come down to Midmeadows on a train that would land him at the house at ten

o'clock. We went over the day's campaign at the breakfast table, and I gave her my last instructions. At nine o'clock, Uncle Jerdon drove up, and I got into the carriage to go to the station, bidding her good-bye, for his benefit.

The old man was loquacious as usual, but offered nothing in regard to affairs at Midmeadows. He commented upon the crops and the state of every farm we passed, without ever touching upon Miss Fielding's condition. If this were his custom with everyone, no man could be safer to have about the premises, but I had an idea he was more communicative with the doctor. At any rate, it had seemed best to me to make him believe that I was going up to town.

I had already prepared the plan by which I was to outwit them both. The up-train came into the station first, while the down-train waited on a siding for it to pass. All I had to do was to bid Uncle Jerdon good-bye, get into the smoking-car, and, as it pulled out, drop off the step and dodge quickly behind a woodpile beside the track. Here I waited, peeping over the top till the down-train had gone and I saw Dr. Copin get into the carriage to drive off with Uncle Jerdon. Then I walked leisurely back to Midmeadows, went into the cabin and waited with what patience I could.

I had to stay from ten till two o'clock, before I saw the carriage go back with its passenger. The wait had been long, but it was not so anxious a time as I had spent before, for I knew that Joy would be quite able to cope with the situation. But I was relieved to see the carriage go back, and left the cabin the moment the vehicle was out of sight.

I had gone only half-way up the lane when I saw Joy coming to meet me. She looked tired and pale. She ran to my arms and kissed me.

"Oh, he's infamous!" she cried. "I never would have believed it of him!"

"He didn't suspect you, then?"

"Suspect? No, he was too busy with his own machinations for that.

Chester, if you had been there, I think you would have killed him! And I acted—how I acted! I got more and more in a rage, and I led him on with every bit of cunning I had till I had found out his worst. Oh, I was vile!"

I tried to hide my own rising fury. "What happened?" I demanded.

"Oh, I can't tell you! Let me try to forget it! He did everything that we have suspected, and more! I let him borrow money of me—I permitted his familiarities and his vulgarity as long as I could endure it—I listened to all his schemes. Why, Chester, d'you know, he is trying to destroy me, and make *her* take my place permanently! He hasn't a scruple! He's after my money, and, worst of all, after *me*! It's incredible. Oh, if you can't outwit him, I'm lost!"

"There's only one sure way, now, to foil him, Joy. You must marry me this afternoon!"

"I thought of that, too," she said, "and I think I'm ready. This forenoon has opened my eyes to the danger. If you say so, we'll go over to the Harbor. Oh, Chester, can you really marry such a mutilated, enslaved person as I am?"

"I am going to free you," I said, still holding her close.

"And Edna—" she broke away to look at me fearfully. "What will you do with Edna?"

"Tomorrow there will, I hope, no longer be such a person."

"Then sha'n't we wait till tomorrow?"

"You forget," I said, "that, at his first opportunity, it is possible for *him* to marry *her*! The risk is too great!"

"That settles it—come to the house and we'll get Leah!"

My hopes reached to the skies, then, and I was sure that I could conquer anything and everything that stood between me and the fulfillment of her rescue. With the surrender, she, too, gave herself up completely to the occasion. We took hands and raced up the lane like two children. In that moment I got a fresh glimpse of what sort of person Joy really was, when she

was free. Edna's galumphing was not more gay and abandoned, Edna's laugh never rang out more merrily. When we burst into the house I think that Leah, for a moment, thought we had both gone mad.

We did not even wait for Uncle Jerdon to return with the carriage. I went out to see that my motor-car was in order, while Joy, laughing with Leah so gaily that I could hear them from the stable, prepared for the trip.

Joy threw up her window, to call out, "Chester, I want that little chain Edna gave you! I must have 'something old and something new, something borrowed, something blue'!" I knew, then, that the last trace of feeling at that incident had disappeared.

She came down all in white—hat, veil, gown, gloves, stockings, shoes, parasol. Leah, too, was dressed for the occasion, modestly, as usual; for, though she could well have carried off a modish toilette, she always shrank from being in the least conspicuous, as if fearing to compromise Joy by appearing to assume a social equality. She was in a frock of *écru* linen, just severe enough in its trim design to keep her place with Joy's bewitching laces and flounces and chiffon. I myself made a sorry-looking bridegroom, I fear, for I had found something to do under the belly of my machine and the employment did little to make the only costume I had any the neater.

So, bidding King good-bye, we were off with enthusiasm. Even Leah had caught the infection of our high spirits—for a moment the tension had been let down all along the line. Leah had indeed much reason to be happy. She had implicit confidence in my ability to frustrate the doctor's plans, she saw herself now safe with Joy, she anticipated for her mistress a new beatitude. Under the influence of this, I noticed that she lapsed, for the first time in my experience, partially into a negro dialect. It was the more remarkable and significant because I had seen her under the stress of fear and horror, and neither had affected her speech. It

showed me how rare perfect happiness had been in her life that this glint of joy should break the bonds of her speech and unloose the tongue of her girlhood. Both Joy and I laughed freely at her, and she laughed herself with us.

We raced madly for the Harbor, sought the Methodist minister there, went into his cool, prim front parlor, were introduced to his wife—who had that day enough to gossip about, I'll warrant—and the thing was done in ten minutes. Then we piled happily into the car and pelted home.

Joy looked at me with new eyes. "You've done it, haven't you!"

"You bet I have!"

"How did you ever manage it! I thought I had refused you!"

"I don't understand it myself. It just happened. It had to be."

"You ought to be a highwayman!"

"It's partly *your* fault, you know!"

"And I've known you only a month! How reckless! It must have been that incorrigible, irresistible, unexpected, unknissed nick in your chin! I've gone from new moon to full, at a bound! Now I'm a bride-rampant: I could fight my way to you through eight miles of jungle! Was I pretty, Leah?" She turned and held out her hand.

"Deed you *were*, Miss Joy, honey, I never see you beat!"

How she laughed! "And you were the sweetest bridesmaid, too! See her eyes, Chester, *please* look round! Never mind if we do run into a tree, today. Did you ever see such hidden depths of gold as are beneath her eyes? Isn't that color and outline perfect? There's no wildfire or heroics about Leah, but she's got more brains than both of us put together! And she's got a Southern accent now, that you couldn't dissipate with an electric battery. Leah, you're as beautiful as a jaguar! Can't you go faster, chauffeur, dear? I'd rather eat fly-paper than ride in a slow automobile! Say, it's awfully stimulating to get married, isn't it? I'm going to do it all the time, after this."

I leaned over to kiss her, and we

nearly ran into the depot-wagon on its way from the train. We were followed by two dozen eyes till they were hidden by a turn of the road.

So her brain coined as we sped along, shrieking with laughter. But Joy's frolic mood subsided as we approached Midmeadows. She looked at me plaintively and said:

"The idea of the White Cat being married before she's had her head and tail cut off!"

"Oh, that'll be done before you know it!" I said. "What I'm thinking is that now Dr. Copin will never be allowed at Midmeadows again, if I have to keep him out by force. With him out of the way, we can manage the rest. But no more of that, now. It's our wedding day! We ought to have told King to bake a cake!"

We had quieted down enough by supper-time to talk the matter over calmly and plan for tomorrow. The time had, queerly enough, more the effect of parting than the beginning of a new and happy life. Joy grew wistful and *distracted* as the evening wore on. I would not let her talk of "the murder," as she called it, and I tried to keep her mind from returning to the mystery of Edna's presence. Finally she said:

"Chester, I'd like to send her a message. Just think, I've never had any communication with her!"

"It will do no good," I replied.

"It will do no harm," she insisted. "I may never have another chance. I'm going to write a note for you to give her, if she comes tomorrow. Will you?"

I said that of course I would, and she sat down at her secretary and, after thinking a few minutes, biting her pen, she wrote this:

DEAR EDNA:—What has brought us together we can never know. But it is terrible to me to think that, being so closely and mysteriously related, we could not have been friends. For all you have done to me and mine, I forgive you, and somewhere and somehow I hope that you will forgive me for everything I shall have done to you.

JOY FIELDING.

It was the first specimen I had happened to see of Joy's hand-writing, and was, as she had said, quite different from Edna's. It was bold and flowing, sharply slanted and graceful, the hand of a fast writer and a quick thinker. I put the note in my pocket to give tomorrow to Edna. I should but pass it back to the same hands that had written it, it would be read by the same eyes that saw it now—but I could guess with what scorn and anger it would be received.

Joy bade me good night with a tremor in her voice, gave me a long, clinging kiss, and looked up into my eyes.

"I'm not really your wife yet, you know, Chester," she said.

"Come slowly, Eden," I quoted.

"And I may never be—" The tears filled her eyes.

"Do you think I shall fail, after to-day?" I said.

"I still have my revolver, if you do. Remember the White Cat, and your promise!"

"That's a sad thought for a wedding night! I'm going to save you!"

"Poor Edna!" she said, releasing herself. Then, as if she thought it unwisely to leave me sorrowful, she flashed a smile at me, waved her hand, and ran upstairs.

III

I HAVE said so much of my "plan" that it is now quite time to explain it, for it was of the simplest. Many of the recorded cases of multiple personality, or rather, according to a more modern interpretation of the state, "dissociated personality" had arisen, I found, from a shock, sometimes purely physical, sometimes mental. It was my idea that in Miss Fielding's case the process might be reversed—that I might inhibit her secondary self by some violent excitement. A long process of hypnotic treatment might, I knew, effect a cure more or less stable, but the doctor's superior knowledge and, heretofore, his superior advantages, had made me doubt of succeeding in that

way. To take her to any competent specialist was inexpedient for the reason that we should meet with a steady opposition from Edna, who could do much to make such a course impossible.

The means I intended to employ were, I must confess, brutal; I intended to frighten Edna to within an inch of her life—to frighten her, that is, so that she might be afraid to reappear. This explanation is superficial, but it conveys the idea; what really would happen, I thought, was that Joy would "wake up" and resume permanently her normal condition. I was not competent to explain the rationale of it, I trusted, in a way, to the mere reversion of the processes that had been described in similar cases of disintegrated personalities.

Exactly how to accomplish this end I was not yet decided, save that I had prepared myself with a pair of revolvers and blank cartridges; I left the actual operation to the inspiration of the moment, taking advantage of the circumstances. I knew that the mental shock must be severe, and that the tension should be prolonged almost to the breaking point. In some way or other it would come to threatening her life. In my mind it was like deliberately breaking a badly-set bone that it might heal again aright. So desperate a remedy I had not wanted to describe to Joy, nor did I ever expect to tell her, even should her cure be effected.

Of the cruelty to Edna, I had no thought. I knew no other way of accomplishing what I desired, and my sympathies, naturally, were entirely with Joy. She alone, surely, had a right to exist in that fair body. Seeing that I could not settle the ethical considerations involved, and that they only impaired my will, I cast them aside. I offer no other excuse for my conduct. It seemed expedient, in fact, the only thing that would be effectual of ridding my wife of her incubus. If it were wrong, well, I would take the blame. I have never been able to settle the question in my own mind, even yet.

She slept late, the next morning. I

was downstairs when she rang for Leah, and so heard nothing, but it was no surprise to me when, a few minutes later, Leah came down and said:

"It's Edna."

The fight was on. I was now prepared to undertake (as it would certainly seem to a spectator) to torture my wife of a day half to death. I will not attempt to describe my own feelings as I anticipated the prospect.

"Has she tried to telephone?" I asked. My voice, I imagine, was now like that of a surgeon at an operation asking his assistant for a knife.

"No," said Leah.

"Hurry up, then. You must manage to overhear what she says, if possible. I must know whether the doctor's coming or not. Have you sent Uncle Jerdon away?"

"He's harnessing up to go to the Harbor, and he'll be gone all the forenoon."

"Good."

She went into the kitchen and prepared Edna's breakfast, while I crept upstairs and listened to hear in case she telephoned. As soon as Leah went up with the breakfast tray, I went down again and walked into the kitchen.

"King," I said, looking square at the Chinaman, "today I'm going to drive the devil out of Miss Fielding. You sabbee?"

He grinned very good-naturedly, "Yep, I sabbee," he answered, paring his potatoes calmly.

"Maybe I make heap noise. You sabbee?"

"Yep, I sabbee!" again.

"You no mind me, King? You not be frightened?"

He laughed and said: "Aw, no! I no care. Maybe I come help. I sabbee debbil all-light!"

"No, I won't need your help, King. I can do it alone, I think. All I want, you stay here, and not be frightened."

"Aw, I no flighten'. Wha'sa-matter? You no think so?"

"Well, you don't know anything about it. Sabbee? You must keep quiet, sure."

"Oh, I sabbee all-light. Maybe

somebody ask me, I say, 'I not know!', I sabbee. I say, 'You go-to-hell!' he-he!" He laughed to himself. "You heap good man, you all-light, sure. Dlive away debbil, tha's all. Wha's a-matter? You no sabbee me? Aw?" He turned away in scorn at my distrust.

I was pretty sure that I could trust to his imperturbability, and returned to the library, satisfied, leaving King still chuckling inanely to himself.

In a moment Leah came down again and said hurriedly to me, "She's just telephoned. She said nothing about yesterday, or that you were here! He must have said he wasn't coming down today, or at least not this morning, for she tried to tease him to come. She's all dressed up—it's astonishing—I can't tell you!" She left me and immediately afterward I heard Edna's footsteps on the stairs.

For what reason she had dressed herself so extravagantly—whether from sheer wilful fancy, or a desire to tantalize me or to seduce me from my fondness of Joy—I have never decided. She wore an evening gown of gold tissue, sheer as gossamer, fold on fold, embroidered with gold threads all over the low-necked corsage. About her forehead was a garland of gold laurel leaves, beautifully modeled and tooled, interlaced with a slender string of coral beads. Her arms were bare. On her right breast was a red velvet rose, she had stockings of scarlet silk and golden slippers. It was a costume for a fancy dress ball and had indeed been originally made for that purpose. To see her appear, now, and shine in the morning sunlight like a butterfly, was to see something as extraordinary as it was picturesque.

She came to me with all Joy's grace, and held me her hand, laughing.

"So you're here again after all, Chet," she said. "I thought I'd dress up for you. You've never seen me to advantage. How do you like it?" She turned slowly round for my benefit.

"You're an empress!" I exclaimed. "I don't deserve this honor!"

She began dancing a minuet all alone, speaking as she swirled.

"Indeed you don't! I didn't want you here yesterday, really. But now you've come down again, you'd better stay." She curtsied demurely. "But look out for the doc—tor!" She was off again in a circle. "I suppose it was Joy, who invited you! I'll have to entertain Joy's guest, I suppose. There! Now sit down and talk to me."

What was behind her whimsical mood, and why she so willingly received me, I could not guess. When I had taken a seat she tapped me with her fan and said:

"You know I've always liked you, Chet, but you see the doctor thought it wasn't best for me to have you about. Really, I oughtn't to let you stay now. He'd be perfectly furious, you know. He thought you had gone up to town. You must hide, if he comes."

"Trust me for that," I said.

"So Joy wants you to come?" she continued. "I suppose you'd never come down just to see me! You must tell me about Joy. Is she nice?"

"She's lovely. Oh, you'd love her, Edna. It's a pity you can't know her. It would save so much trouble!"

"Oh, are you in love with her, then?"

"I'm very fond of her!"

She slapped her fan viciously and bit her lip. Then,

"I'm sure you like her much better than you do me, anyway—don't you?"

"I know her better than I do you, Edna, and she has always been nice to me."

"And haven't I? Didn't I dress up for you, sir?"

"I have a letter to you from her—would you like to read it?"

She held out her hand for it instantly, and I gave her the note. She glanced it over, then tore it up spitefully.

"Cat!" she exclaimed. "If I could only see her, if I could only talk to her once! I'd tell her what I thought of her! Oh, I'll give her something to forgive!" She looked about her, as if for something particularly Joy's upon which to vent her anger.

Just then, as luck would have it, Leah entered the room with a vase of flowers.

"Get out of here, you black hussy!" Edna cried. "Don't you see I'm busy? Your place is in the kitchen!"

Leah turned and left without a word. "I've stood enough from that nigger," Edna said. "I'm going to get rid of her this very day."

"You said you'd keep her as long as I stayed," I interposed.

"Oh, Joy asked you to plead for her, I suppose! You're only here hoping to get a chance to see Joy, anyway! How did you get in, yesterday, anyway? What happened? I'd forgotten all about that! What did I do in the evening? I can't remember. Were you here then, with Joy?"

"You fainted away at the dinner table——"

"So you had your evening with Joy all right? Oh, what do you care for me? Nothing! You hate me, I believe!" The next moment she was crying, but, before I could assuage her, she had risen and ran upstairs.

I passed quickly into the kitchen and spoke to Leah.

"Has Uncle Jerdon gone?"

"Yes."

"Then keep out of the way as much as possible. I'm almost ready."

I went up to my own room and took the revolvers from my hand-bag and loaded them with the blank cartridges. Scarcely had I slipped the weapons into my pocket when Edna burst into the room with her arms full of dresses. She held out the pale green silk gown peignoir in which I had first seen Miss Fielding.

"Does Joy wear this?" she asked.

"Yes, sometimes," I answered.

"Well," she said, "she never will fascinate you in it again!" And with a single violent gesture, she ripped it from top to bottom. She took up another gown and tore that in two, also. She had begun on a third when I went up to her and stopped her hand.

"Edna, you mustn't!" I commanded.

She threw the whole heap upon the floor and clasped her bare arms about my neck. "Oh, I hate her! I hate her!" she wept. "You are in love with her, Chet, you know you are! What

have I done that you should hate me so? You know how I like you—why don't you love me a little?"

"Aren't you engaged to the doctor?" I asked, letting her stay with her face near mine. It did not seem wrong—it was Joy's own face.

"Oh, I suppose I am, but what does that matter? Mayn't I like you, too? He's the only friend I have. He's helping me! He's trying to free me! What are you doing? Are you helping me, Chet?"

It was hard enough to answer her question. What could I say? Somehow, even now I could not lie to her outright—not while looking deep into Joy's own eyes.

"If you had shown any mercy for Joy, if you even desired to be friends with her, I might try to save you," I said. "But after this, how can I?"

"Oh, I'll be friends with her—I'll do anything if you'll only love me, Chet! Why can't we both love you? I'll promise not to be jealous, we'll share you. If you marry her, then you'll have me too, and I'll have you!"

She looked up at me with wistful eyes—Joy's eyes—and Joy's arms were still about me. Never had Joy clung to me so closely and tenderly. It was all I could do to put her away and answer her preposterous suggestion.

"But you're engaged to the doctor—he told me so——"

"I'll break it off with him—I won't have anything more to do with him—I'll telephone to him now!" She even started to go to her room. I was in a tumult of emotion. How could I begin my work when she acted in this way—as I had least expected? True, I knew that probably in a moment her fickle mood would change, but I could not begin yet. I held her back.

"You know," I said, "that the doctor is plotting to get rid of Joy forever. You know, and I know, that *that* is the way he's been trying to help you. How can I care for you, when I know that is your purpose?" God knows I loathed myself for the hypocrisy, but I was at my wits' end.

She stopped and looked at me re-

proachfully. "Ah, you *are* in love with her, then! I thought so! She's everything, and I'm nothing, to you!"

She flung away again in a new rage and walked proudly, scornfully downstairs. I followed her. Just before I caught up with her, I heard her angry voice ring out.

"Oh, you sneak! Didn't I tell you to stay in the kitchen? Take that for your impertinence, you wench!"

There was the sound of a blow and a scream. I ran in and found Leah with her face bleeding. Edna, gorgeous in her silken gown, stood lowering like a furious queen, a heavy bronze paperweight in her hand.

"You pack out of this house immediately!" she cried, her voice strident with passion. "I've had enough of your tricks! I want you to know I'm mistress here!"

Leah appealed to me with a glance. I nodded, pointing behind Edna's back, outdoors, to the old cabin. Leah disappeared, weeping. I went up to Edna.

"Do you expect me to love you when you act in this cruel way?" I asked quietly.

She stormed up and down, striding like a leopard in a cage, swishing this way and that, her fists firmly clenched.

"Oh, she's in league with you and Joy. I know all about it! She spys on me—hides things from me—tells on me! She and you are trying your best to get rid of me—the doctor said so! You are plotting to destroy me right now!" she flashed out, turning to me, her lips quivering with excitement. "I can tell! I know! You may go, too, Mr. Castle, I'm through with *you* too! Leave this house, please!"

I tried to pacify her, thinking that, distraught with the violent moods she had shown today, a reaction would soon come. She was almost hysterical, and I waited for the revulsion of feeling, without heeding her words. In a moment it came. It was as if an angel and a devil were contending in her for the mastery; the angel won again.

She sat down limply in a chair that was drawn up to the secretary, and the

tears came to her eyes. I saw Leah go out the front door and hurry down the lane.

"Oh, I'm so wretched!" Edna complained bitterly. "I haven't a friend—not even Dr. Copin. All he wants is my money, and all you want is Joy. Oh, Chet, let me be your friend! Let me be your friend—you may stay—I'll be good, sure I will! I'll do anything if you'll only love me and be good to me! I'll take Leah back; I'll dismiss the doctor. Why was I sent here, anyway? Nobody wants me, nobody cares for me!"

She looked up at me and held out her hand. It was the stricken deer appealing for protection to the hunters. I had never seen her so gentle and tender. It was, for the moment, as if Joy herself were pleading for her life.

As I stood there, watching her, debating what to do, her head dropped to her left hand. With her right she had taken up a pencil which lay there, and was abstractedly making marks upon the blotter—circles and crosses and zig-zag scrawls. But, even as she turned to me again, her eyes softened, I saw her right hand move more regularly over the paper blotter. She was writing, and writing automatically, without looking at what she was doing. A sudden idea came to me that the writing was inspired by some subconscious, subliminal self and I must let it have free play, that I must divert her thought from that hand.

So I walked up to her and touched her head, stroking her soft, brown hair. "Poor girl!" I said, "I wish I could answer your questions; I wish I might help you. Perhaps we can think out a way. We'll talk it over and see."

Her hand was still writing, as she looked up at me and listened.

"But you must tell me all about the doctor, and what he is doing. Is he coming down here today?"

She leaned affectionately against my side, her hand still working unconsciously. "I don't know," she said. "He may come on the eleven o'clock train, perhaps."

This was unexpected, I had little

time, then, in which to act. But now her hand had stopped, and I bent over her shoulder to look at the blotter.

She turned her face to me again and said, "Won't you please kiss me, Chet? You've never kissed me! I'm sure you've kissed Joy!"

Then, following my glance, she saw the writing for the first time. "Oh, how strange!" she cried. "I've been writing! I didn't know it. What is it, anyway?" Then she read aloud:

"Don't hesitate! Cut off my head and my tail! Hurry! White Cat."

"How absurd!" she commented. "See, it isn't my handwriting at all! It isn't anything like it. But it's like—*it's Joy's!*" she burst out, and she jumped up, staring at me. "What does it mean?"

I had recognized the handwriting at the same instant, and was as surprised as she.

"It's Joy's!" she repeated, her voice now almost a scream. "Oh, but she is a cat! I believe she's trying to get rid of me. She wants you to kill me! Tell me, Chet, what does it mean?"

I didn't answer, for the shock of this communication bewildered me. It was like the voice of a ghost, urging me. It was Joy, calling up from Edna's sub-consciousness.

"It's Joy!" she cried, a third time, as she got the meaning, too. "She's trying to call you, through me! She loves you, and you love her. I knew it! You're trying to murder me! But I'll not let her have you! I'll kill you first!"

She stood with her little fists doubled shaking with fury, her nostrils dilated, her cheeks gone white, her lips apart showing the little uneven line of clenched teeth. The strap of her gown had fallen partly off, leaving one smooth, creamy shoulder bare, the golden wreath of laurel was tipped sidewise in her hair.

Then, in a quick whirlwind of passion, she snatched the silver-handled poker by the fireplace, raised it, and struck at me with all her strength. Slight as she was, and weak, ordinarily, her emotion gave her an unnatural

power. The blow grazed my cheek, plowing a deep, ragged furrow through the skin. I grabbed the weapon from her, and she stood defiantly before me blazing in all her finery.

The time had at last come to act.

IV

I MAY well say "act," for it was acting that was now necessary. I smarted from her blow, I saw in her a vicious, dangerous fury, with a devil snarling in her, but I had nothing but pity for her. How could I be angry? She was desperate, but it was the frenzy of insanity that urged her. And, moreover, she stood in my own bride's image, beautiful, splendid, virile. She was, in outward seeming, the woman I loved best in all the world. I had, I insist, nothing but the tenderest pity for her whom I must now, if I had the power, harry, harass, torment and destroy. But, to accomplish this I had to play a part. I could show no trace of kindness or gratitude. So I nerved myself and simulated rage when never was rage further from my heart.

"Oh, you would, would you!" I cried through my teeth as villains do upon the stage. "Well, then, Miss Edna, it's time to talk honestly to you. I *am* in love with Joy, and I do hate you with all my heart! I would free Joy if I could, but you and the doctor are too much for us. I know what she's had to endure from him in your own person and her own, and rather than let her go through that outrage again, rather than let his lips touch hers, whether you consent or not, I'll kill you both. I can't touch her, for I love her, but I'm going to kill *you*, now!"

With that I drew a revolver from my pocket and took steady aim at her. Oh, I gave her time! The one thing I was afraid of then was that she would dare me to shoot. Luckily her nerve failed her.

She screamed and ran to the door like a deer. She screamed as she dashed upstairs, tripping over her gown, calling wildly for Leah to come

and save her. She screamed again and again as, giving her ample time to escape, I followed after her, shooting once, twice, thrice, stumbling up after her, muttering histrionic curses. There was no doubt that I had frightened her! But could I keep it up till she was literally beside herself with terror?

"Break the bone and let it heal right again!" I kept repeating to myself. But to break it—ugh! I shuddered and nerved myself again.

She had run into her room, slammed the door and locked it. I threw myself upon it and beat upon the panels with my hands. Again she screamed—the sound sickened me. I cried out that I would kill her, that there was no use in resisting, that I would break down the door. I shouted hoarsely enough, there was no need of pretending, now.

She came to the door and wailed.

"Spare me!" she cried. "Save me, Chet! You were wounded and fainting when I took you into my house. Didn't I do everything for you? How can you! How can you! What have I done?"

I fired again to stop her. I couldn't stand that reproach. Her screams broke out again. I could hear her overthrowing tables and piling them madly in front of the door.

Then her shrieks stopped suddenly, and I heard her running here and there as if searching for something. I heard drawers pulled open and emptied upon the floor, I heard chairs falling. Then there was an instant's lull.

Next, a muffled shot rang out. A bullet ripped through the panel of the door and buried itself in the mahogany wainscoting, missing my head by barely an inch. She had found her revolver—I had forgotten about that. The game was getting serious.

But now it was more necessary than ever to finish. I went down into the hall and shouted to King. He appeared at the dining-room door, his eyes as round as glass marbles, his mouth open.

"Get an axe, King, and bring it up here, quick!"

I went up again and, putting my pistol cautiously to the hole in the panel, fired another blank cartridge. My shot was immediately answered by her revolver, but the bullet went wild.

King came blundering up the stairs with the axe, showing a white mouthful of teeth. I had never thought it possible for him to show so much excitement, but he was quite wild. I took the axe and struck a heavy blow at the panel, splitting it open. Had I really wished to break down the door immediately, I would have aimed at the lock. But I wanted to draw her fire, and to torture her to the limit of suspense and fear.

She screamed again as the wood was ripped into splinters, and two more shots were fired in quick succession, only one of them going through the door. She had spent four cartridges now, and, as she held the last one, I had to act quickly so that she would have no chance to reload.

"You go downstairs, King," I commanded. "Wait for her when she runs out. I'll chase her outdoors. She has only one shot left, so you needn't be afraid of her. I'll get that bullet, all right. Scream at her, scare her to death if you can, but don't touch her. If you do, by God, I'll kill you!"

He stole noiselessly down the stairs and disappeared. I tried another panel with the axe, but, as she was clever enough not to shoot, I reloaded my first pistol, and, taking what risk there was without thought, I took the axe again and with one fierce blow smashed the lock to pieces. With the concussion the door fell partly in. I dropped the axe, put my shoulder to the door and swept the barricade inward, darting quickly through with my pistol raised.

She was handsome—terrible. Frightened as she was, she had control of herself yet, and was magnificently defiant, breathing in quick gasps with her mouth open, her bosom heaving, as if she were suffocating. Her embroidered waist was half torn off and hung

away from her neck, revealing her brown-white breast, or perhaps she had torn the bodice open herself for air. Her golden wreath was gone. I saw it on the floor, trampled out of shape. Her hair had fallen over her shoulders, but its disarray was lovely. Her filmy, sparkling gown was rent and spotted from her falls.

She had taken refuge behind an overthrown table and stood with her revolver ready. Over her head was a drifting cloud of smoke, about her a wild confusion of disordered furniture. A shaft of sunlight played upon her disheveled costume. In the stable, I heard the dogs barking frantically.

So much I observed in one flash—the picture will always be with me as distinct as a photograph—but I had no time to speak, or even to think what I should do next for, after that momentary pause, she bent forward deliberately and fired at me point-blank.

I felt a sting on my left arm where her bullet grazed, but, without stopping to find whether I was hurt or not, I fired with both pistols at once, and went forward at her. The sound of the double shot was terrific in the closed room. Her eyes, staring and fascinated, kept on me for an instant as if she were paralyzed, then she screamed again—her voice rivaled the pistol shots—and, suddenly pushing the table with all her might against me, she ran for the door. As she passed, I shot again. The din was maddening.

It was not my intention to finish with her there, though, and again I gave her a chance to escape, driving her before me. As she dashed out she brushed against a framed Madonna upon the wall and it came crashing down. She stumbled on the threshold—I thought she would never get away—and, moaning pitifully, she half ran, half fell, down the stairway.

It was a dirty piece of business. I was sickened by it. But, having gone so far, I had no thought of stopping till I had accomplished my object. I gave her a moment's time, therefore, and then, leaving that horrid smoking chaos in her room, I followed her.

She had gone out the front door and turned the corner of the house, making, by some fatal impulse, for the stable. The barking of the collies had ceased, but as I got to the yard I heard it recommence in a higher and more violent key. It seemed incredible to me that she had sought refuge in the stable, but as I looked, I saw the great door rolled shut. When I came up to it, King came out of his cabin room.

King came out; but he was no longer the smiling, unctuous Celestial I had known. In that yelping, screaming clamor, I stopped to look at him in surprise.

He had fastened the mask upon his head and held the cymbals in one hand. With the other he dragged a package of fire-crackers six feet long, braided together in quadruple rows—there were as many there as in a hundred of the common Fourth-of-July packages. It was such an equipment as the Chinese use for their New Year's Day celebrations.

Before I could speak to him he had thrown the string into an empty barrel and had lighted the fuse. Immediately there was an uproar like a regiment of infantry firing at will. As soon as this was started, he took up his cymbals and began capering about clanging them. The barking of the dogs rose frantically.

Surely, if anything could increase her excitement, this grotesque accession would, and I prepared for the last scene. The uproar inside now rivaled King's racket; Edna was screaming for help, and instantly it occurred to me that the dogs, who had always hated her, might be now upon her, and, if I did not act quickly, would tear her to pieces.

I tried the big door; it was held by something inside. Smashing in a window, sash, glass and all, with my naked fists, I climbed in and went through the harness-room to the carriage shed.

There she stood, now disheveled to a shocking state, her shining golden skirt ripped half off, her bosom bare, her hair streaming. She was driven into a corner and was held there at bay

by three snapping, yelping dogs. She had caught up a carriage whip and was slashing away so savagely that the collies dared not close with her, but I could see that it was only a question of a few minutes before she would collapse.

It was my Joy in face and form, remember! It was her face that was distorted with terror, her form that was draped in glittering rags, it was her voice that rose, shriek on shriek, above the din, till my blood ran cold. It was her voice that screamed to me for help before she was torn to pieces. Its terror will be with me always.

"Oh, help me! Help me!" she cried.

But I steeled myself for the *coup de grâce*. "Break the bone," I muttered, "and let it heal again!"

So I staggered to the great door, slipped the hasp and let in King, prancing, beating his cymbals, droning some savage chant. The sun shone full upon him, glinted on the brass cymbals and illuminated the red and white and black of his atrocious mask. He danced up to her, nearer and nearer. I watched her, spellbound.

Then, as I looked, I saw her face change. Her whip hand dropped, her staring eyes closed. She clutched at her naked breast, tottered and fell headlong, striking her forehead against a carriage wheel as she went down like a golden wave dashing on the shore. I sprang to catch her, just too late. But the next instant I was down on the floor beside her, beating the collies back, protecting her from their teeth by my own body. Even as I did so they drew off, stopped their fierce snarling and lay down, panting, to watch me quietly. How my hopes rose at this! How eagerly I awaited for the prostrate form to revive. Outside, the last of the fire-crackers popped at intervals in the smoking barrel.

"Get some water!" I cried to King.

He threw off his mask, and dropped his cymbals with a clanging clash and was off through the big door.

The next moment I looked up from the pale scarred face on the floor, to see Dr. Copin standing at the entrance.

Leah, wide-eyed, staring, was behind him.

"What in hell's the matter?" he demanded, and he looked in astonishment at the scene, at the flaccid body in its magnificent disarray, at me holding her passionately in my arms.

I watched her face for the first sign of life, and did not answer him. His presence mattered little, now, in my agonized suspense.

"For God's sake, Castle, what does this mean? Are you all mad? What has happened? What the devil are you doing here, anyway? Let me see to Miss Fielding, please."

I attempted to hold him off with one hand, but he seized me roughly before I was able to resist, and threw me to one side. He dropped to his knees, looked at the face and felt for the pulse. I took my revolver from my pocket and pointed it at him.

"You take your hand off her, or I'll make you!" I cried.

Quick as a flash he turned and looked at me bravely. "Shoot if you dare!" he said. "This is my day, and this is my Miss Fielding. I take no orders from you, sir. It's my duty as a physician to revive her. She'll send you packing herself, when she comes to."

I was, after all, so fearful of her condition by this time, that I was glad to take advantage of his skill. It would soon be settled one way or the other, at any rate. So I said:

"All right, then, if she asks me to go, I will. But we'll wait and see."

And so we stood, facing each other, for a tense moment, then turned to her again. King came running in with a basin of water. Leah took it, stooped down and began to sprinkle the pale face.

At that moment I saw Minnehaha look up, and crawl, whimpering, to her mistress's side. Chevalier and John O'Groat followed her. Joy's eyes opened. I sprang to lift her up.

"Edna!" the doctor cried.

"Joy!" I called, myself.

Life came flooding into her face, and I knew intuitively that it was Joy—Joy illumined, now, in some secret way, by the knowledge of our victory.

"Chester!" She smiled wanly up at me. "Chester, send him away! I want to be alone with you! I have something to tell you!"

"Miss Fielding!" the doctor exclaimed, "I must see you a moment first."

She turned to him and a wave of crimson swept over her cheek.

"I beg your pardon, doctor, I'm no longer Miss Fielding. I'm Mrs. Castle; and I beg you to leave immediately!"

Then, still holding my hand close in hers, she looked up at Leah and took her down beside us.

"Oh, Leah, dear, we've won! We've won!"



SUMMER'S TOKEN

By Frank Dempster Sherman

ALONG the purple slopes,
Past leafy vine and tree,
The Summer goes with fragrant hopes
And luring melody.

Her footstep on the earth,
Her whisper in the air,
Awaken all the souls of mirth
And make the whole world fair.

The hills are sweet with song,
The valleys fill with fire;
Joy in the garden tarries long,
The Rose has her desire.

O Love, ere Summer slips
Another year away,
Yield me the rosebud of your lips,
And name the happy day!



DIVORCE has three causes—Man, Woman, and Marriage.



SHREWD WOMAN

"I HEAR Mrs. Widowe is to marry the doctor who attended her late husband."
"So she'll get her husband's property, after all."

A ROSARY OF TEARS

By Katherine La Farge Norton

THE orchestra had paused, either through simple human pity, or, as seemed more likely, to rest. Even a good orchestra must have time for physical and mental refreshment, and the guests at the St. James would gladly have accorded eternity to this one, had the management been kindly disposed and permitted it.

A faint breath of the tropical night stirred the foliage in the palm-room, where there was light and laughter and the crystalline tinkle of glasses. The predatory lady from Memphis, clad resplendently in white lace and paste jewels, moved restlessly about the room. Her blue eyes were cat-like in their quick, intense scrutiny. They said, at the St. James, that nothing under the roof escaped her knowledge.

Designedly, she passed the two who sat at a glass-covered table in a secluded corner, affecting not to notice them. When the rustle of her garments and the clatter of her high heels died away, the man spoke.

"She must have spilled the peroxide," he said, with a grating laugh. Her hair was, indeed, more brilliant than usual.

The woman laughed, too—a little hysterical laugh that sounded more like a sob. She took her watch from the silver bag that hung at her belt, opened it, and laid it between them. "An hour more," she answered irrelevantly. "Like Cinderella, I must go at twelve."

"Are you afraid your auto will turn into a pumpkin drawn by white rats, and your chauffeur into—let's see, who was Cinderella's footman?"

She shook her head. "I used to

know, but it was long ago, when I was a child."

"You're only a child now," he returned quickly.

"No, I'm a woman, and I must meet whatever comes to me as a brave woman should." She fixed her clear eyes on his and spoke steadily. "I mustn't be a coward, I mustn't refuse to do anything just because it's hard. I've got to be true to my best self, and you've got to help me."

The war correspondent's face whitened for an instant, then the color surged back in waves. "Come out on the balcony," he whispered; "it's insufferable in here."

She followed him through the French window. Their two chairs were in their own particular corner still, placed as they had been every night for a week. He arranged the rose and green velvet cushion at her back precisely as she liked it, and drew his own chair near hers—just close enough not to touch.

A white-coated waiter hovered obsequiously in the background. "Green or purple?" asked the war correspondent, scarcely knowing the sound of his own voice.

"Neither," she sighed. "Who cares for Crème de Menthe or Crème d'Yvette on a night like this?"

The white-coated one whisked out of sight—tactfully. He was needed within, where the lady from Memphis had cornered a hardware drummer from Pittsburg, and was coyly inquiring whether or not champagne was intoxicating.

"A week ago tonight," said the war correspondent abruptly, "I didn't know you. I believe, now, that the

world was made in seven days. Mine has been made and shattered into atoms in an equal space of time."

"Don't say that! There's good in it—there's got to be good in it somewhere! We'll have to find it together, past all the pain."

The late moon rose slowly above the grove of palms beyond them; the Southern night breathed orange blossoms and roses. A tiny ray of blue light shot from the solitaire on the third finger of her left hand. It was the only ring she wore.

"I can't believe it's true," he said, somewhat roughly. "If you cared as you say you do, you'd—" He choked on the word, and stopped abruptly, but his eyes made his meaning clear.

They were unusual eyes—for a man. So she had thought a week ago, when she went down the corridor to her room at midnight, humming gaily to herself a fragment of a love song. They were big and brown and boyish, with laughter lurking in their depths—they met her own clearly and honestly, always, and in their look there had never been that which makes a woman ashamed. Yes, they were unusual eyes—for a man.

"Honor" is an elastic word," she replied. "For most women, it means only one thing. A woman may lie and steal and nag and break up homes, and steam open other people's letters, and betray her friends, and yet, if she is chaste, she is called honorable. I made up my mind early in life that I'd make my own personal honor include not only that, but the things men are judged by, too. If a man broke his solemn pledge, you'd call him a coward and a cur. So," she concluded, with pitiful pride, "I'll not break mine."

Her voice was uneven and he felt, rather than saw, the suffering plainly written on her face. "Tell me," he began gently, "of him. What does he look like? What sort of man is he?"

"I came away in such a rush that I forgot his picture, else I'd show it to you. I would have sent back for it, only I didn't want my people to think

I was silly, and, besides, there was no need. I could remember how he looked and every tone of his voice, until a week ago tonight."

"Is he tall?" The war correspondent himself was a trifle over six feet.

"No, not very—only a little taller than I."

"Smooth-shaven?"

"Yes."

"Dark?"

"Very."

"What does he do?"

"Business, in a stuffy office, from nine to six. He spends his evenings with me."

"Every evening?"

"Yes, and all day Sunday. There are just two things in his life—the office and me."

"Go on," he reminded her, after a pause.

"It's simple, and, in a way, commonplace. We met, and he cared—terribly—from the first. I didn't, because, just then, it was difficult for me to trust any man. I told him why, and he said he'd make me trust him. He did, but it took him a long time. It's pathetically easy for a woman to love a man she can trust. And so I wear his ring, and have for two years. He's given up his home and his people and his lifelong friends for me, moved to a strange city where he knew no one but me, started in business all over again, worked like a slave, taken the hard knocks without a whimper, even to me, and finally got things established on a firm foundation. When I go back, we're to be married."

"Do you call it honorable to marry one man while you love another?"

"He's been everything in the world to me," she continued, ignoring the thrust. "I've never had a doubt nor a difficulty of any kind, since I've known him, that he hasn't helped me through. Every thought that has come into my mind, I have felt perfectly free to tell him. We've never quarreled. On my side, the feeling has been of long, slow growth, but there are no hard words lying between us. It's all been sweet, till now."

"He's clean-minded and clean-hearted and true-souled. If he has ever lied to me, I've never found it out. He has been absolutely and unswervingly loyal in thought, word and deed, and as for jealousy—why, I don't believe he knows what the word means.

"You know there are two kinds of love. One is an infinite peace that illumines all your life, so surely and certainly that it's not to be taken away. It's like daily bread to you. The other is like wine—swift and terrible and full of fatal fascination. The one has come to me from him—the other from you."

"Honey!" It was the high, shrill, bird-like voice of the lady from Memphis, swiftly rounding the corner of the balcony. "Is this your watch? I found it on the table and I've been looking all over for you!"

"Thank you." Miss Ward took the trinket coldly and never turned her head. The man, having small respect for the lady from Memphis, did not rise from his chair.

After a little hesitation, she retreated, pausing in the background, among the palms, to shake a warning finger with assumed coquetry.

"Naughty!" she shrilled. "You mustn't flirt! If you do, I'll write to your honey and tell him what you're doing. You see if I don't! And then he'll come and catch you at it, and where will you be then?" With a mirthless cackle, she vanished into the palm-room, where there was light, and the tinkle of glasses and the bubbling of champagne.

"Half-past eleven," said Miss Ward dully. "Thirty minutes more."

The war correspondent caught his breath as if he had been suddenly hurt. "One little hour," he answered, his voice low and tense with suppressed passion. "Only one little hour to last us for eternity, and we're wasting it like this. I love you, I love you, I love you! I love you with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, and with all my will. I love you so much that heaven would be hell without you, and hell itself would

be heaven if you were there. I love you with a love that will not die when I do. I love you, do you understand? God knows I love you!"

She turned her face toward him, thrilled to the depths of her soul.

"And I," she breathed, caught in the whirlwind of his passion, "love you—in just that way!"

His hands closed quickly over hers. "Then," he pleaded, "come. There are no barriers between us—they are nothing but cobwebs. Sweep them aside with one stroke of magnificent daring, and come. We'll be married in the morning and sail for New York immediately, then go abroad for a year. Two telegrams will set you free, and explain everything. Come," he whispered, "only come! Youth and love, and the wide world before us! We'll be together till death divides us! Come—promise me you'll come!"

In thought, she surrendered for an instant, then broke away from him, shuddering. "Don't," she gasped. "Don't make it so hard for me to do what is right. I won't be dishonorable, I won't be disloyal, I won't be untrue. Happiness that comes from wrong-doing is always brief, but, oh, dear lad, I love you, with a love nobody ever had before or ever will have again. I'm not taking anything away from anybody else to give to you, so it isn't dishonorable—it can't be. Tell me it isn't!" she cried, "oh, tell me!"

"It isn't," he assured her. "You couldn't be dishonorable if you tried. You're the bravest, finest woman I've ever known."

From within came the notes of a violin, muted. The piano, mercifully softened, followed the melody with the full, rich accompaniment which even miserable playing can never wholly spoil.

The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me;
I count them over, every one apart—
My rosary! My rosary!

"The pearls mean tears," she whispered brokenly. "Our rosary is made of tears!"

The lady from Memphis clattered

past them on the balcony, singing the words apparently to herself, but really with an eye to dramatic—and impertinent—effect.

For a week, they had been together, the gayest of a gay crowd. That day, all plans had mysteriously fallen through. "Lady Jane," the beautiful Kentuckian, who had been unanimously elected chaperon, had been summoned home by a telegram. A letter had caused another unexpected departure, a forgotten engagement loomed up before another, a sick headache laid low a fourth, and only they two were left—"the tattered remnant of the old guard," she laughingly said that morning, when they met in the palm-room after breakfast, as usual, to discuss the program of the day.

"Then," he retorted, "the old guard will make the best of it." So they had spent the day together, in public places, mindful of the proprieties. A long talk in the afternoon, full of intimate and searching details, had paved the way for the dazzling revelation made by an accidental touching of hands. In an instant, the world was changed.

"Suppose," she said, "that you had been obliged to go away this afternoon, before everything was fully acknowledged between us? Oh, my dear, don't you see what we have? We've got one whole day—a little laughter and a great deal of love and pain, crystallized by parting and denial into something sweet to keep in our hearts for always. Nothing can take today away from us—it's ours, beyond the reach of estrangement or change. Tonight we'll shut the door upon it and steal away, as from a casket enshrining the dead."

"Not dead," he flashed bitterly, "but buried alive!"

Oh, memories that bless and burn,

Oh, barren gain and bitter loss,
I kiss each bead and strive at last to learn

To kiss the cross, sweetheart! To kiss
the cross!

The last echo died away, the violin rattled into its case, the piano was closed. The musicians went home, and there was a general movement toward

the doors. A far clock chimed twelve and she rose wearily from her chair. "Good night," she faltered, her hand fluttering toward his; "I cannot say good-bye, but we must never see each other again."

How it happened, they never knew, but he took her into his arms, unre-sisting, and kissed her fully, passionately, upon the lips.

All the joy and pain of the world seemed crowded into the instant they stood there, locked in each other's arms. Then the high, bird-like voice of the lady from Memphis broke on their ears in a grating staccato.

"She was out here when I saw her last, flirting dreadfully with the war correspondent. I guess she didn't know you were coming on that late train."

Eagerly, happily, the Other Man rushed out on the balcony, crying boy-ishly, "Mabel! Are you here?"

The words died on his lips. The man who held her in his arms kissed her again, slowly, hungrily; then reluctantly released her. She steadied herself against the railing of the balcony. In the moonlight her face was ghastly. The scent of the orange blossoms seemed overpowering her with deadly fragrance.

"Didn't I tell you?" asked the lady from Memphis gleefully. From the open window, she was enjoying the situation to the full.

The Other Man was bewildered. "Mabel," he said inquiringly, "I don't quite understand. Didn't you get my wire?"

The war correspondent stepped forward. He had faced the guns of the enemy before and was not afraid now. A single commanding glance, mingled with scorn, sent the lady from Memphis scurrying back into the palm-room. "I know who you are," he said to the Other Man, "and I owe you an explanation. I love Miss Ward and I have been trying all day to induce her to break her engagement with you and marry me instead."

The Other Man laughed. He went to the balcony rail where the girl stood, half-fainting, and put his arm around

her. "I don't doubt it," he said. "Isn't she the finest, truest, sweetest woman the Lord ever made? Any man who doesn't love her is a chump. You and I will be good friends—we have a great deal in common."

He offered his hand, but the war correspondent bowed and swerved aside. "Good night," he said thickly. "I have played and lost. I lay down my hand." He went through the window hastily, leaving the two alone.

"Mabel, dear Mabel!" said the Other Man softly. "You've been through something that has been almost too much for you. Sit down and rest—you're tired!"

The words, calm and tender, brought back to her tortured soul a hint of the old peace. In a pitiless flash of insight, she saw before her two women, either of whom she might become. One was serene and content, deeply and faithfully loved, sheltered from everything Love could shield her from, watched, taken care of in all the countless little ways that mean so much. The other was to know Life to its uttermost, all its rage, jealousy and despair, to be shaken in body and soul by fierce elemental passions, to face eclipsing miseries alone, and drain the cup to the lees. The difference was precisely that between a pleasure craft, anchored in a sunny harbor, and the toiling ship that breasts the tempestuous seas.

She sat down and suffered him to take her hand. He stroked her wrist silently, in the old and comforting way he had when she was nervous or tired. His face was troubled—hers was working piteously. The lights died down in the palm-room and the last of the revelers went away. The house detective paced through the long room twice and made a careful survey of the balcony.

"Darling," said the Other Man, "you don't have to tell me anything you don't want to—you know that; but wouldn't it make you feel better? You've always told me things, and I'm the best friend you've got. Surely you're not afraid now?"

His voice failed at the end, and the

girl drew a quick, shuddering breath, but she did not answer.

"He was kissing you, wasn't he," asked the Other Man, "when I came?"

"Yes," she said dully, "he was kissing me, but it was for good-bye. He told me he loved me and I had told him I loved him. I've known him only a week. He never so much as touched my hand until today, but it was only my own personal honor that kept me from marrying him tomorrow, as he begged me to. I've told you the worst now. Believe what you like—do what you will."

The Other Man sighed. His mouth was boyish and for the moment unsteady, but his eyes sought hers, as honestly and clearly as the war correspondent's, who had unusual eyes—for a man.

"I think I understand," he said brokenly. "I don't blame any man for loving you, dear—I'm prepared for that—and we've been separated so long and the moonlight and the palms and the roses and all, and you were used to being loved—I think that's why. You were lonesome, weren't you, sweetheart? Didn't you want me?"

Infinite love and infinite pain surged together in her heart, blending into unspeakable tenderness. "Yes, I wanted you," she whispered. "I always want you. I'm—I'm a bit upset just now, but I haven't taken anything away from you to give to anybody else. It's only an undiscovered country—a big one—that he found today. I haven't been intentionally dishonorable. I fought, but it was no use—he simply swept me off my feet. Forgive me, if you can!"

"Hush! There'll never be any need of that word between you and me. I've forgiven you, long ago, for everything you've ever done or ever can do. It's an unlimited fund to draw on—that and my love. You know," he went on, in another tone, "that, if it was for your happiness, I could give you up, but I'm pretty sure it isn't. You'd never be as happy with anybody you'd only known a week, as you would with me, because I've loved you for

years. You have my whole heart, Mabel—there's never been another woman with even the hint of a claim. I know all your little moods and tenses, and you don't have to explain things to me. I know you can't ride backward and the touch of satin makes you nervous, and that you don't like to walk when you have high-heeled shoes on, and a thousand other little things that are infinitely dear just because they are you. I was thinking of them all the way down here, and loving them—every one."

"I don't deserve it," she answered, and then broke into wild sobbing.

The Other Man moved his chair closer and drew her head to his shoulder. "There," he said, slipping a clean handkerchief into the hand that covered her eyes; "cry if you want to. You're tired—my little girl is tired."

He held her so until the storm spent itself. He kept his face against her hair, soft and silky and fragrant with orris—forgetting himself utterly in his loving pity for her.

At last she moved away from him. Her tear-stained face, in the moonlight, filled him with tenderness so great that his love was pain.

"It's late," she said. "It must be after one o'clock. I must go upstairs."

She started toward the open window, but still he held her back, gently. "Dear," he said softly, "we've been away from each other four weeks and three days and I've come two thousand miles to see you. You haven't kissed me yet. Don't you want to? You don't need to if you'd rather not, but if you could—"

His voice vibrated with passionate appeal. She lifted her white face to his and kissed him, mechanically. "Tomorrow," she breathed, "I'll be

more like myself; I'll try to make up for tonight, but if you love me, let me go now!"

He went with her to the elevator and watched till she was lifted out of his sight, smiling at her until the last—the old, loving smile. He went out to the balcony again, and sat down with his arm thrown over the back of the chair that had so recently held her. His brow was wrinkled in deep thought, but his boyish mouth still smiled.

Presently there was a step behind him and he turned—to look into the face of the war correspondent, who spoke first.

"I've come back," he said, "to shake hands with you, if you don't mind."

The Other Man's hand met his—more than halfway.

"And," continued the war correspondent, "I want to apologize. I've been all kinds of a brute, but what I said was the truth. I love her, as no man ever before loved a woman. That's my only excuse."

"You're not to blame for loving her," returned the Other Man generously; "nobody is. And as for her loving you, that's all right, too. She's got a lot of temperament and she's used to being loved, and you're not a bad sort, you know—not at all. And," he concluded fondly, "my little girl was lonesome without me."

The war correspondent went away quietly. In the moonlight, he could see the boyish face of the Other Man, radiant with an all-believing, all-forgiving love.

"Yes," said the Other Man, again, after an interval, and not realizing that he was alone, "that was it. My little girl was lonesome without me."



THE NEREID

By Madison Cawein

I SAW one night a Nereid white
 Arise from her coral caves.
Her sea-green curls were pale with pearls,
And her limbs were veiled with the waves.
Through the moonlit foam I saw her come
 Up the billow-haunted shore,
And faint and sweet I heard her feet,
 Foam-like, through the surf's long roar;
While ever the wind and the rolling waves
Kept time to her song of ocean caves,
That she sang to her harp of mist and moon,
Of moonbeam shell, this ocean tune:—

II

"Come follow, come follow, to caverns hollow,
 That sound with the sighing sea!
Come follow me o'er the waters hoar!—
 Come away, come away with me!
Come follow, oh, follow, to grottoes hollow,
 And caves that are ocean-whist,
Where the sea-weeds twine and the star-fish shine,
 And the rosy corals twist.

III

"Come follow me home on the wandering foam,
 That rolls my world above!
My bosom shall bear thee safely where
 The sea-nymphs dream of love.
They will lie at thy feet and thy heart shall beat
 To the music of their sighs;
They will lean to thy face and, like stars, thou shalt trace
 Their radiant, love-lit eyes.

IV

"Come away, come away! where, under the spray,
 The haliotis glows,
The nautilus gleams and the sponge-grove dreams,
And the crimson dulse like sunset streams,
 And the coral-forest grows.
Come away to my caves, my emerald caves,
 From the moon and the sun deep hid!
Forget the world, down under the waves—
The world of the man that sighs and slaves—
Forget the world, there under the waves,
 In the arms of a Nereid!"

THE ADVENTURE OF THE VERY OLD MAN

By Temple Bailey

AGAINST the red rug thrown over the back of his chair, the Very Old Man's face looked like carved ivory—wrinkled, impassive.

"How many months will you give me, doctor?" he asked.

The doctor moved in his chair uneasily.

"Oh, it may not be for years," he lied.

"It will," snapped the Very Old Man; "tell me the truth."

"Then six months, perhaps——"

"And perhaps—six days?"

"It is impossible to say." The doctor's fingers tapped the table nervously. "But if there are any legal——"

The Very Old Man was not nervous. "There are no legal matters. My will is in my lawyer's hands—everything will go to institutions—there is no one to come after me."

"It seems a pity"—the doctor was obviously making conversation—"to leave this old house to strangers."

"It is a pity—" After a moment's silence, in dismissal, "Will you send Hughes to me when you go?"

Hughes came in at once, but it was several minutes before the Very Old Man noticed him; then, as the valet gave a tentative cough, he started out of a dream.

"Hughes," he ordered, "get my things ready. I am going out."

"What, sir?" stammered the man.

"I am going out," repeated the Very Old Man, with his claw-like fingers clutching the arms of his chair.

"But the doctor said—" gasped Hughes.

"The doctor told me everything

there is to tell, and I am going out, Hughes." His tone was final.

"Very well, sir," and Hughes passed into the next room.

When he was again alone, the Very Old Man, steadying himself with his cane, rose and went across the room to the window and drew aside the curtain.

Outside the sun was shining. A soft wind was blowing the cherry-blossoms from the tree on the terrace into the basin of the fountain. At the end of the garden, the sea rose like a wall of sapphire, while along the line of the horizon the sails of the ships flashed gold in the radiance of the Spring morning.

"Ah!" breathed the Very Old Man, and unfastened the window so that it swung outward, and the fragrant, moist air blew in upon him.

As he turned back and faced the shadows of the room, he sighed, but in his eyes the fires of youth were relighted, and when at last he was clothed in black broadcloth, set off by a jeweled fob, with a short white shirt and black stock, he carried himself with an almost forgotten jauntiness, and would have discarded his cane altogether, if it had not been for a certain unsteadiness of limb that warned him.

"I am going alone," he insisted, in spite of Hughes's protests, and not a word would he say of his destination; but when he came into his old garden, where a marble Apollo on the driveway flirted with a time-stained Venus behind the box hedge, he told his secret to the flowers.

"I am going to see her," he confided; "I am going to see Sweet-and-Twenty."

He made his way slowly to the

beach, stopping to pick a bunch of pale violets. He knelt stiffly to find them under their heart-shaped leaves, and laid down his cane to pin them to the lapel of his coat. Then he gathered a bunch of pink hyacinths—pink as the cheeks of Sweet-and-Twenty.

As he rose a chill breath of wind from the sea set him a-shivering. "I am very, very old," he whispered; "I am very, very old."

He tottered down the sands with a shadow on his face. A young fisherman, brown-cheeked, with the muscles showing like corded net-work on his bare arms, was mending a net.

The Very Old Man sat on a piece of driftwood and watched the mending of the net. The fisherman whistled, and the music mingled with the sound of wind and wave—and for the Very Old Man there had been so many days in the silence of a dark room.

Slowly the shadow lifted from his face.

"Have you a boat?" he asked the fisherman.

The man nodded.

"Can you take me to the Point?"

"Yes. But it's rough after last night's storm."

"I am used to the sea."

It was a difficult business getting into the boat. But when the Very Old Man was tucked safely in the stern, he took off his hat and the wind blew his long white hair back from his eager face.

"There is someone waving," said the boatman, as they rode up and down through the breakers.

But the Very Old Man did not turn his head. "It's Hughes," he chuckled. "Let him wave. I'm not going back."

He grew garrulous after that, leaning on his cane and watching the white gulls whose pointed wings cut across sea and the blue of the sky. He told of Southern waters and of Northern ice, of days under burning suns, of Arctic nights that never ended.

At last the fisherman said enviously: "And I have sailed to the Point and back again all my life. I have never been anywhere else."

"If I could have sailed every day from my garden to the Point, I should never have sailed the seas," quavered the Very Old Man; "but that happiness I was denied."

The fisherman, not understanding his emotion, asked:

"Have you been often to the Point?"

The Very Old Man looked down at the pink hyacinths and answered sadly, "I have not been there for sixty years."

"Sir!" stammered the boatman.

"Not for sixty years," repeated the Very Old Man. "Before that I went every day for one happy year, and then I came no more—and after today I shall not come again."

He clasped his hands on the top of his cane and his eyes swept the sea.

"Does it still stand there?" he asked presently, voicing his thoughts.

"What?"

"The lighthouse?"

"There is a new one, with a larger light."

"And the white cottage on the mainland?"

"It still stands there."

"I see it now," cried the Very Old Man, as they were lifted high on the crest of a wave. "It has a new roof."

"That roof was put on before I was born," said the boatman; "it is not new."

"It is new to me," said the Very Old Man obstinately; "I have not been there for sixty years."

The lighthouse loomed large now, and back of it was a line of dark rocks washed by the tumbling seas, and back of the rocks a group of somber pines, and back of the pines a strip of green pasture, and back of the pasture the white cottage with its red roof.

As the boat neared the beach, a girl ran down to meet it. She was tall and straight, and two long braids like burnished copper hung to her waist. Her skin was white and her lips sparkled; her eyes were like the sea, and her gown was like her eyes and the sky and the sea.

At sight of her the Very Old Man

dropped his cane with a crash and stretched out his shaking hands. His voice rang out wildly, exultantly over the waters.

"Margaret!" he cried; "Margaret!"

The boatman stared at him with his dripping oars suspended—at the erect figure, at the glowing face from which the mask of age had dropped. He glanced over his shoulder toward the beach.

"That's Lora," he said, and a quick red sprang to his cheeks; "her father keeps the lighthouse."

"Lora?"

"Yes."

"Of course," peevishly, "of course it couldn't be Margaret—it has been sixty years." And he collapsed, a huddled-up, trembling figure in his greatcoat.

When they came into shallow water, the girl ran out bare-footed into the curling edges of the waves and steadied the boat. As her hand lay warm and white on the insensible wood, the Very Old Man laid his own over it.

"Was your mother Margaret Blume?" he asked, searching her face with dim eyes.

She shook her head, smiling.

"No—but my grandmother was Margaret Blume."

"Is she living?"

"Yes."

"In that house?" He pointed to the white cottage.

"Yes. She was born there and she has lived there all her life."

"I know. Take me to her."

The girl looked at the fisherman with wide, questioning eyes. He tapped his forehead significantly.

"Come," she said gently, and led the way across the sands.

As the fisherman did not follow them she stopped and looked back.

"Why—won't you come, too—?" she faltered, all blushes and timid embarrassment.

"I sha'n't push myself in where I'm not wanted," he flung out sullenly.

"But I want you," she pleaded.

His eyes met hers and cleared. "I

know," he said, and the bitterness had gone out of his voice, "but the rest don't—and I'll stay here." He turned and began to drag his boat up on the sands.

She went slowly up the rocky path to the house with the red roof, and the old man, following, saw that now and then she stumbled because of the tears that blinded her.

On the porch an old, old woman sat blinking in the sun. She was shriveled and shrunken until one feared that if she moved she would rattle in her clothes like a nut in its shell. Her back was bent so that the arms of the chair towered above her shoulders, and her claw-like fingers grasped at the crooked handle of a cane.

As her granddaughter and the Very Old Man came up the steps, she spoke querulously. "Lora," she asked, "is the stew ready? I'm hungry, and there are onions in it—I smelled them."

The girl leaned down and spoke loudly in her ear.

"Here's somebody to see you, grandma," she said.

"What?"

"Somebody to see you."

The old woman whimpered. "I don't want company," she wailed; "I'm hungry."

The Very Old Man stood before her. His face was white. The pink hyacinths drooped in his hand.

"Margaret," he said uncertainly, "don't you remember me? I am Lionel."

At the name Lora flung up her head and looked at him. But the deaf old woman only blinked in the sun.

"She has talked of you, often," said the girl.

"To you?"

"Yes—before she was this way."

"And now she has forgotten?"

"I think she has forgotten—everything."

He gazed down at the babbling figure with something like terror in his eyes. In his youth he had said, "Love is eternal," and that morning he had said it again, "Love is eternal."

The old woman's hands moved rest-

lessly on top of her cane. A golden gleam shot from one of the fingers.

The Very Old Man caught the hand to his lips. "She still wears the ring I gave her," he said, and in the joy of that discovery he did not seem to notice that the hand was rough and the nails broken.

As he bent over the little figure in the chair the movement showed the still graceful lines of his courtly figure—but she plucked her hand away and picked at the thread on her dress—an uncouth, doddering old creature.

"Don't you remember, Margaret," he asked vehemently, "how we picked violets at the foot of the hills over there?"

For a moment the babbling ceased, and her eyes followed his pointing finger; but it was at the crest of the hill that she gazed, where a small cross stretched its white arms above the green.

"That's where they buried my baby," she complained, and began to weep softly.

He stared and shrank back—and after a long silence he said to the girl, "You see, she has not forgotten—her child."

Lora's eyes reproached him. "What mother could forget her dead baby?"

"True."

After another silence the girl said:

"You have loved her then, all these years?"

"Yes."

"I didn't know men loved—that way."

"I cannot speak for all men—for myself, yes."

The old woman wailed, "I'm hungry."

"Take her in," he begged; "I must go." He dropped the withered hyacinths into old Margaret's lap. "I brought them to you," he said dully.

But the old woman only blinked, and as she hobbled across the porch the flowers fell to the floor and lay behind her in a pink trail on the painted boards. He stood looking down at them drearily until the girl came out.

"Won't you rest?" she asked timid-

ly, for there was that in his face that made her afraid.

He dropped into the chair that the old woman had vacated, and Lora bent and picked up the hyacinths, one by one, until she had gathered the whole mass of pinky perfume; then she held them against her lips, inhaling the fragrance.

He watched her as she caressed them.

"I wish I had not come," he broke out suddenly. "Oh, God, I wish I had not come!"

She sat down on the step at his feet, and looked up at him with pity in her limpid eyes.

After a heavy silence he went on: "I had thought of her as always young, with lips and eyes like yours——"

"But she is very, very old."

"She is changed."

"Think of her life," the girl defended; "it has been very hard."

His clenched old fist beat upon the arm of the chair. "They should have let us marry. But they separated us—I was sent away to travel, to sail the seas, to forget; but I never forgot, and when I came back Margaret was married."

"Oh!" the girl breathed.

"They made her do it—told her lies, and that was the end of it—for them. But I—I have lived alone for sixty years, without love, without wife, home, children—for sixty years. I said then there should be no other, and there has not been. But all my life I have looked forward to seeing her once more." Then again came the wail, "I wish I had not come."

"There is so much sorrow in the world." The girl's tears dripped down upon her interlaced fingers.

"What do you know of sorrow?" he cried in his old, bitter voice.

Lora's gaze wandered to the beach where the young fisherman lounged in the sun. In her eyes was the look of the woman who has already come into her heritage of suffering.

And all at once a great light shone in upon the soul of the Very Old Man—he had come to worship at the shrine of

love, and behold, here was love, glowing in the heart of youth.

"You love him," he whispered.

"Yes." And the red blood flamed over her cheeks and up into the brightness of her hair.

"They won't let us marry," she confessed, emboldened by the compassion of his glance.

"Why not?"

"He is poor and I am poor——"

"And I was rich," bitterly. "So parents play the part of Providence—and break the hearts of the young."

"Grandmother would have helped me——"

For a long time after that he bent forward on his cane, with his eyes on the floor. The girl drew little sobbing breaths, and there was no sound but the sighing of the wind, the far-off beat of the waves, and the dry cackle of old Margaret's satisfied laughter, as she ate her meal by the kitchen fire.

At last the Very Old Man stood up, and straightened himself painfully.

"Come," he said, bending kind eyes on the weeping girl, "you must show me around the old place. I shall not see it again."

As they walked together, she offered him her strong, young arm for support, and he felt the warmth of her young blood through the thinness of her sleeve, and now and then the wind blew a lock of her yellow hair against his lips. So he had walked sixty years before with Margaret, to watch the sunsets over the sea, to see the first stars come out, to listen to the murmur of the waves when the darkness came, and the moaning of the wind in the pines.

So entirely was he carried back to the past that gradually it was Margaret and not Lora who walked beside him, and presently his lips formed the words of a little song:

Come and kiss me, Sweet-and-Twenty!

He beat the time with his ebony cane, and the girl, looking up, saw his face as it might have been in his youth, strong, tender, adoring.

When at last they came to the beach, he put his hand on the shoulder of the

young boatman. "Is there room for three in your boat?" he asked.

"Yes," the youth answered, wondering.

"Then we must take Lora with us," said the Very Old Man.

Their eyes questioned him. In a half-dozen words he outlined a plan.

"I cannot," the girl protested, but her eyes shone with happiness.

"I have always wanted her to run away with me," the young man declared, "but she wouldn't."

"We will run away together," said the Very Old Man, and laughed, with his head well up and his figure straight.

"But my people——" Lora quavered.

"They will make you wait," warned the Very Old Man. "Think how I have waited—sixty years."

And at that she shuddered, and consented.

She climbed into the boat, and sat beside the Very Old Man, and her cheeks were pink and her lips were red, and her eyes were like the sea.

And as they rode away, the Very Old Man looked at her, and not once did he turn back to see where the bent figure of a doddering old woman again sat on the porch of the house with the red roof, and picked threads from her black gown with restless fingers; for love was with him in the boat, and youth and happiness.

The three talked so eagerly as they went that they did not see that the breeze had freshened, and that the light clouds on the horizon had turned black.

When the fisherman at last glanced up, he bent strongly to his oars, but the wind swept across the waves in a wild blast, and he shouted a warning to the others.

In that moment it grew dark, and the little boat leaped in a whirlpool of waters. The oars were useless, and the fisherman caught Lora in his arms, and they crouched together in the bottom of the boat.

The Very Old Man heard the boy whisper, "Are you frightened?" and the little shivering sobs that answered him.

After he had soothed her, the young man cried to the old one, "Don't be afraid, sir."

"Afraid?" the Very Old Man's voice was exultant. "If one might die out here in the storm!"

"Oh!" Lora shuddered.

"Why not?" he asked, and a flash of lightning showed his tense, old face with the white hair blowing about it. "Why not? If you died here together you would never grow old. To him you would always be beautiful, to you he would always be strong. There would be no parting."

The wind shrieked past them and drowned his words, and the girl, loving life, clung to her lover and sobbed.

"Hush!" he said, "hush!" And at last, "It will soon be over; the wind is dying down."

When the quick storm had lulled they landed at the foot of the Very Old Man's garden. Hughes came down, white-faced, but was sent away peremptorily to get dry things.

An hour later the lovers were married in the dark old room where the Very Old Man had lived alone for so many years, and Lora, as she stood in front of the hastily summoned clergyman, still wore in her bosom the pink and withered hyacinths.

When they were gone, the Very Old

Man stood at the window and watched them. The sun was setting, and as the little boat danced away in the golden light, the Very Old Man strained his eyes after it. "Love is eternal," he whispered, and the wind caught up the words and carried them out to the lovers, then on and on through endless space.

All at once the Very Old Man swayed and caught at the curtain.

"Hughes," he called sharply, and the man hurrying to him cried, "I'll get the doctor at once, sir."

But the Very Old Man shook his head, and, as he was laid on the couch, "Send for my lawyer, Hughes," he commanded.

When the lawyer came, a paper was drawn up and ratified with a trembling signature, and it was set forth that all of which the Very Old Man should die possessed was to go unreservedly to "Lora, the granddaughter of Margaret Blume."

"And now," he murmured as the doctor bent over him, "open the curtains, and put me close to the window."

The gold had gone out of the sky. The stars shone white in the darkness; the sea murmured and sang in the windy night. The old man listened and smiled, and after a while he murmured "Margaret!" and that was all.



A SONG

By Duncan Campbell Scott

NOTHING came here but sunlight,
Nothing fell here but rain,
Nothing blew but the mellow wind—
Here are the flowers again!

No one came here but you, dear,
You with your magic train
Of brightness and laughter and lightness—
Here is my joy again!

THE SECRET

AFTER MAETERLINCK

By Katharine Metcalf Roof

SCENE—*A long 'corridor in Carnegie Hall from which other corridors lead out in a long perspective that is finally lost in shadow. The place is dimly lighted and on either side are doors, all closed. Two women with mops and pails come down one of the corridors and pause.*

FIRST SCRUBWOMAN

There is no end to the dust. One is always cleaning, but there is always more.

SECOND SCRUBWOMAN

There is a window open. . . . That is how it comes in. The window should be closed.

FIRST SCRUBWOMAN

No, the window is open to let in the light and the sun. There is little light in these halls, and in some, the sun never comes all day. . . . You would say it was always night here. It is better that there should be some dust than that one should never have the sun. . . . It is the people that bring it in.

SECOND SCRUBWOMAN

They bring it in with their feet from the street without. They are always coming. There is always the sound of feet in this place. Day and night they come. You would say the whole city passed through these halls.

FIRST SCRUBWOMAN

And they are always strangers. Seldom twice does one see the same face.

SECOND SCRUBWOMAN

Their faces, too, are strange. Their hair is long. One would say they came from the woods.

FIRST SCRUBWOMAN

Hush! Someone is coming.

A young girl is seen gradually emerging from the darkness at the end of the corridor.

FIRST SCRUBWOMAN

How slowly she comes! You would say she did not know her mind.

SECOND SCRUBWOMAN

She is looking at the little white cards on the doors. . . . She is reading the names. On every card is a name and on every door are many cards—all different.

FIRST SCRUBWOMAN

One would say she was looking for a name she could not find.

The girl approaches the two women. On her head is a hat wreathed with flowers. While she speaks to them her eyes do not seem to see them.

THE YOUNG GIRL

You can tell me, perhaps, in which room I shall find Ignatius?

THE TWO SCRUBWOMEN (*shaking their heads*)

We do not know him.

THE YOUNG GIRL (*in agitation*)

He is here. I know he is here. He

has told me so. He comes every day. I do not know why. He will not tell me. . . . But I know he comes. He is in one of these rooms . . . if I only knew which one. But I cannot find even his name upon the door.

THE TWO SCRUBWOMEN (*pityingly*)

There are many rooms—all different—but the doors are alike, and it is from the doors one must enter. Alas, we cannot help you!

They walk away. THE YOUNG GIRL *watches them until their forms are lost in the shadows of the corridor. As she stands there a swarthy youth approaches carrying a large burden. He stops from time to time and looks about like one who has lost the way.*

THE YOUNG GIRL

You seem a stranger here also, yet perhaps you can tell me how I may find a man called Ignatius.

STRANGE MAN (*shaking his head*)

I do not know him. I also am lost. I search for one named Feraro and cannot find him. He asked me to bring this to him, but I cannot find him. He is here somewhere, but no one knows. We are both lost. There is no one to help us. . . . We cannot even help each other.

THE YOUNG GIRL

There are so many halls—all alike, and all dark—and so many doors—all closed. They frighten me—those doors. One would say that they forbid one to enter. Oh, oh, oh, I am afraid!

STRANGE MAN

Alas! I cannot help you. I must go my way.

THE YOUNG GIRL *approaches a door and reads the inscriptions upon the little white cards.*

THE YOUNG GIRL

There are numbers with the names. How strange! (*reads*) "Valerian Bolero,

5—6." What can it mean? "*Delicia Saccharine, Tuesday mornings. Beryl Green, 9—12 . . .*" . . . I do not understand. (*Listens.*) I hear footsteps. Someone is coming.

Down another corridor a form appears and becomes finally recognizable as that of a woman in black. She carries in her hand a black scroll.

THE YOUNG GIRL

Perhaps this woman may know. She has something strange in her hand. It frightens me. (*She approaches the woman timidly.*) I wonder if you can tell me how to find a man called Ignatius. I have lost my way and cannot find him. He is here somewhere. I have walked . . . so long. They are endless, these halls. . . . They turn always, yet lead nowhere.

WOMAN IN BLACK

Does he let or sublet?

THE YOUNG GIRL

I do not understand. He comes here every morning.

WOMAN IN BLACK

If you go down the stairs—all the stairs until you have reached the last step, you will find at the bottom a great black tablet and upon that tablet many names in white letters. There you may, perhaps, find the name of him you seek.

THE YOUNG GIRL

But if I do not find it—?

WOMAN IN BLACK

Then I cannot help you. No one can help you.

THE YOUNG GIRL (*trembling*)

I cannot go until I find him.

THE WOMAN IN BLACK *looks at her curiously, then shakes her head and goes her way.* THE YOUNG GIRL *approaches another door and begins to read the names:*

Aurora Day—I have known that name . . . somewhere . . . I

cannot remember (*she starts*). Oh, oh, oh! His voice! I cannot be mistaken. . . . The ears cannot deceive the heart. It is he. He is there behind that door. How can I let him know that I am here? How my heart beats! It beats so loud that I cannot hear (*she listens with her ear against the door*). Oh, oh, oh! (*Starts up, clasping her hands over her ears*). It is not true! There must be some mistake. They have lied, these ears! I must see to believe. I must see and he must not know. But how—but how? The door is closed . . . and it is so hard, like a wall. You would say it was like his heart against which, like a little wounded bird, I beat my wings. . . . And it is so dark. . . . But no, I see a light, a tiny point, a single gleam, but it is light. It is the keyhole. I will look. (*She puts her eye to the keyhole*.) There is someone there, but I cannot see plainly. There is a strange room with dark curtains that glitter with gold, and hanging lanterns and spears. . . . I see armor—and there are fur skins of beasts upon the floor. Now I see a shadow—two shadows. . . . Oh, oh, oh! I can see them in the mirror. Yes, yes, it is he! He takes her hand. They stand together. His arms are about her. His eyes look into hers. . . . The eyes and ears cannot both deceive— Oh, oh, oh, I can look no longer. It is too terrible! (*She crouches against the door with her hands over her eyes. A voice is heard singing within.*) O God, O God, his voice . . . a love song. . . . The song he has sung to me! If it could but have been some other song—some other song! (*A woman's voice is heard singing in answer.*) She sings also. They both sing. One would say they were birds who tell of their love in the clouds above, while I, like some poor dumb creature that has no voice, lie below upon the earth. . . . People do not know how the dumb can suffer, though they have no voice. . . . (*Raises her head and listens.*) I hear footsteps. I must rise. Someone is coming. . . . It is a man. He carries also that same

black scroll. They all carry them. How strange. . . . How terrible. How strange his face is, and his hair. It stands straight upon his brow. You would say he was frightened. What can have happened here to frighten him so? Oh, oh, oh! I am afraid of this place! His mustache is so fierce and so terrible. I must speak to him lest I die of fear. (*The man comes up to where she is standing and stops. She speaks in a low voice.*) Oh, sir, can you tell me, please, how I may find the stairs? I have wandered so far I have lost them. I have forgotten where they are.

The man stares at her and does not speak, but shakes his head and makes gestures with his hands.

THE YOUNG GIRL

He is dumb. How terrible! I am dumb because I cannot sing, but this poor man cannot even speak. It is always so . . . There is always someone who has suffered more. (*The man begins to make sounds.*) Oh, oh, oh, how terrible are the sounds made by the dumb when they would speak!

The man still makes the strange sounds. At last he reaches out his hand and moves her aside.

THE DUMB

'Scuse, signorina.

THE YOUNG GIRL shrieks; as she does so THE DUMB MAN opens the door and a flood of light streams into the hall. In the centre of the room stand the man and the woman who are singing, clasped in each other's arms. As the door opens they stop singing, but stand as they are for a moment without moving.

THE YOUNG GIRL

Ignatius!

IGNATIUS (*coming forward*)

You should not have followed me. Poor little girl! It was not yet time for you to know. They are unwise who would break the lock of the future.

THE YOUNG GIRL (*sobbing*)

It was so long. Something told me

to come; something told me that you would be glad. But I have come and you are not glad. You do not love me.

IGNATIUS

You have forced the lock of the future. You have broken open the golden casket and stolen my secret, and the joy of it has fled.

THE YOUNG GIRL

Yes, I know your secret. You love this other woman. They say that men's hearts are double, so that they can love more than one woman. But women are not so. I do not wish such a love.

IGNATIUS

The other woman——

THE YOUNG GIRL

The woman who was in your arms as you sang together.

IGNATIUS

This woman . . . Aurora Day.
. . . Child, is it possible that you do not know where you are?

She shakes her head. He crosses to the door, swings it back upon its hinges and points to the golden letters inscribed upon it.

THE YOUNG GIRL (reads)

"School of Opera." At last I understand! (They exchange a long look). Forgive me, beloved . . . It was so dark out there I could not see; but now I am in the light.

IGNATIUS

My soul!

THE YOUNG GIRL

But the secret—the secret——

AURORA DAY (to IGNATIUS)

Tell her.

IGNATIUS

It is a secret of the future. Who knows that we are wise to speak of that which may never be?

AURORA

Tell her, Ignatius.

IGNATIUS

You would know my secret. You would look upon the gift yet unfinished that I would have laid in its passionate perfection at your feet . . . It is this: some day I shall sing for all the world as I sing now for Aurora and you. I shall be a star in the operatic firmament. Yet I would have won first the world to lay at your feet. For that reason I came here each day. I told you where I came, but not why. Now you know.

THE YOUNG GIRL

It is better that one should know. A secret between two that love is like the shadows that creep at nightfall. They grow large and spread until all is darkness and one can no longer recognize the familiar forms that one has loved. I fear the shadows and the darkness.

IGNATIUS

Come, let us go out into the light.



FLIPPER—Have you noticed any improvements due to the automobile?
FLAPPER—Well, down our way they have built a new hospital.



DOLLY—Did you ever catch your husband flirting?
MOLLY—That's the way I did catch him.

HIS OCCUPATION

By Ludwig Lewisohn

"S O you are going—actually?"

She stood a little irresolutely at the foot of the stairs amid her grips and boxes. Her husband's question, thrown out in querulous surprise upon his soft, almost stealthy, entering of the hallway, gave Adrienne's mind a sharp moment of recollection. This, surely, was no happy opportunity for indulging memory or regret. She looked at Hugh with cool steadiness. His fair, narrow head was thrown a little backward, his pendulous hands waved the acquiescence of helpless innocence. Deliberately she clicked the final button on her glove.

"Did you expect me *not* to go?"

"Ah, well, I couldn't imagine it. Of course, you are perfectly free to go. You are your own mistress entirely, especially"—he brought this out with shrill emphasis—"from a legal point of view."

"I know," she said quietly.

"Nevertheless," he continued, "I should, from my knowledge of you in the past, have expected some measure of compunction. I did not believe that this cruel and unnatural affair would reach its climax."

"It has, though," she declared. "What is the use of going over that endless discussion once more—and now?"

"I thought it my duty——"

"It isn't!"

"You know——" He waved his hands vaguely.

"That you are an unwilling victim of my perverse desire to live apart from my husband. Yes," her voice wavered ever so little. "Hugh, please, since you are here, see if the cab has come!"

There seemed to her a hint of un-

wonted dignity about his sadness as he turned away, a few minutes later, after a listless handshake. Could there have been, possibly, a tragic graveness in his eyes? She dismissed the idea abruptly—for the moment—and slipped into the street. The severe quietude of tense, cold air received her into its loneliness. Her fragile form nestled more deeply in its wrappings. She gave a brief direction to the driver, stepped into the shabby vehicle, and thus faced, suddenly, with some completeness of realization, her future.

The cabby, following some unaccountable instinct, chose the noisiest and meanest possible thoroughfares for their drive. The elevated railroad blundered grindingly overhead, the electric street-cars shrieked desperately, as their wheels met obstacles of ice and snow. The turmoil deadened deliberate thought, and Adrienne felt a huge forlornness. She looked on either side of the avenue upon the listless squalor of small shops that repeated themselves in endless and unvarying succession. About their hopeless meanness, bare of any sign of effort, there seemed to her a terrible finality of submission to poverty and dirt. She felt, rather than thought, that in her present loneliness and comparative poverty, she was akin to this haggling brood, and morbidly yielded to a sense of brotherhood in sordidness and shame. But her surrender to this self-abasement was not entire. There was a reservation, dim but vital. The first shock of rude contact with hideous realities past, it would come—that which she had dreamed of with an agony of anticipation. Oh, she could

wait! Was it not worth a price, any price? She must try her wings. They had still the lameness of the prison; they would not yet bear her aloft. But soon—today, tomorrow—a very lark at the gates of dawn—so she had often told herself—her spirit would soar in its new gladness of complete liberation.

At present, sudden loneliness and the sharp ugliness of things enslaved her. The cab turned a corner and she found herself, in a moment, before the plain, dark house uptown in which she had rented an apartment, furnished hurriedly and at haphazard in some spare hours of the last few weeks. Sleet had fallen and she hastened to enter the house. But on the ill-kept outer steps her foot slipped, she fell, and a sharp pain passed from her knee through every nerve. For an instant the pain blurred all her senses. When she arose she felt a look of fear steal subtly into her eyes. She shivered and let herself into the semi-darkness of the hall. Some weary flights of stairs—and she was in her new home. She lit a gas-jet—it was small and dim. Huge shadows flickered disquietingly on the cheap wall-paper. Adrienne sat down wearily; her knee ached and throbbed and reluctant tears rose to her eyes.

The rooms of the apartment opened directly into one another and served to offer to Adrienne no sense of refuge or security. She watched feverishly for the sinuous forms of ghastly and evil things creeping upon her from behind. She went hurriedly from room to room, lighting the gas in each, and seeing, as she passed them, her lithe form in dim mirrors. After that she could find no rest. Fear caught her by the throat. Her fleeing image in the mirrors, with its eyes lustrous and startled, mocked at and accentuated her loneliness. She was alone with that wraith of herself and the fear of unseen things. She heard her heart beat and walked more swiftly to deaden the sound. In her desolation she would have welcomed the meanest visitor, and, standing by the door that led to the hall, listened for some friendly and reassuring human tread. She wondered whether Hugh in

any way divined her agony, and shame came upon her at the thought. But she must still continue her weary march, escaping from the unnamable things that seemed to lurk in every corner, glancing furtively at her multiplied mirrored image, or at the crazy flickering of the jets of gas. She felt herself becoming frenzied, her knee was stiff and swollen, and, utterly weary and sick at heart, she cowered like a hunted animal upon a couch, nervously keeping her back turned to the protecting wall. Long after midnight she fell into a sleep of evil dreams, murmuring of desolation and defeat.

II

Mrs. POYNTER was large and wise. She received many confessions, but was richly silent as to her own past. In her quiet way she was fond of Adrienne, but, for reasons of her own, delayed her journey uptown. It was quite a week before she came. Adrienne kissed her with unwonted tenderness.

"So it has not come!" Mrs. Poynter asserted.

"How do you know?"

"My dear, what is the use of one's eyes? Besides, I knew that it would not."

"You knew?"

"Yes."

"Then," said Adrienne, "the trouble lies in me. The circumstances seem to cry out for a sense of freedom—for happiness."

"And you are merely wretched?"

"And lonely."

"Do you still expect the sense of freedom, as you call it?" Mrs. Poynter's tone had the least shade of irony.

"I must!" Adrienne cried. "Otherwise I am defeated—oh, entirely, hopelessly!"

"One usually is, from the point of view of anticipation. Really, life is not without its victories."

"At least, I shall not be alone in my defeat," Adrienne declared.

"You have heard from Hugh?"

"You know that?"

"Dear child, when a man's occupation is gone, he takes it hard. To irritate you, to thwart you, to annoy you with infinite petty jealousies—why, it's an art, a profession, anything you please—but not to be lightly abandoned."

"You put it harshly!"

"Not so harshly as you once put it, though, to be sure, in a different way."

"You are right," Adrienne confessed, "but it's hard to nourish a sense of wrongs. It—slips away from me, hard as I try—in self-justification—to cling to it. And his letter has an appeal, a ring of sincerity. He loves me, or thinks he does, and his life, he says, is a void. He asks for an interview. I have not answered because the whole thing strikes me as—yes, as vulgar. To separate, and then to hobnob," she laughed a little forlornly, "*that* surely is impossible!"

Mrs. Poynter's eyes seemed to be fixed on some invisible point in space.

"Nothing is as likely as the impossible; nothing happens quite as often," she said with elaborate calm. Then more alertly, "Get an occupation, my dear—anything, and send back his letters unopened, or——"

"Or what?"

"Your common household will be reestablished—and soon."

"Never! Do you think I have no pride?"

"Dear child," said Mrs. Poynter, "we must, first of all, live. In the search for some enduring basis of life many things go to the wall. Among them, pride."

"Not mine!"

"Then I shall love you and pity you even more than I do. You must tell me all that happens."

Hugh's first letter was followed by others. He had, in truth, a gift for apparently sincere expression. Among his sentences few had a debased ring. Sinuously they wound themselves into Adrienne's soul, played upon her loneliness, upon her compassionateness, upon her sense of duty; and, as empty day linked itself to empty day, the

sense of her wrongs became more difficult to cling to except at the instigation of her fitful pride. For this lack of iron in her soul she began to despise herself. Mrs. Poynter, she told herself, would have been more relentless, firmer at least, in pursuing a course of action once embraced. Deliberately and laboriously she recalled a hundred incidents of her married life, adding detail to detail until Hugh seemed stripped bare of any rag of manliness and honor—selfish and brutal, a coward and a sneak. But even this painful method lost, at last, its faculty of arousing her, and in her lonely night images would arise, in spite of herself, of a possible reconciliation. Surely he had had an opportunity to repent. To doubt, as she did at times, the sincerity of such love as he professed, might it not be merely an undervaluation of herself, her fragile and appealing charm, her graceful gifts of mind? Wearied by the reiterate temptation of such thought, she hunted rest and forgetfulness in the clamor of the wintry streets.

One afternoon late she saw Mrs. Poynter and attempted, in vain, to elude that keen-eyed lady.

"My dear," said Mrs. Poynter, "one cannot run away from oneself."

Her swift divination annoyed Adrienne.

"Your wisdom, like pride, is not safe from tumbling."

"I never said it was. The folly of overrating my acuteness has never been mine. But when a case is clear! When are you going back to him?"

Adrienne walked on for a space in silence. "I do not know when I *shall* have to go back to him," she said at last, "but I shall probably come to it. I'm not made like you! I can't live alone, and I can't flirt. I haven't formulated it even to myself, but the acutest suffering is, at least, life, and this shadowy vegetating from day to day. . . . Oh, books and society, such as it is—but my whole being cries out, cries out, I tell you, for human intimacy. When I think that I may go on this way from year to

year, for, oh, say for thirty years, I am on the very verge of madness!"

Not until she left Mrs. Poynter did she feel how truly she had spoken. Not until that moment had she really put her soul's need into words.

III

HUGH wrote: "My attitude to this hideous mistake, which seems in danger of breaking up my whole life, has not changed. I go about trying to understand what reasonable causes may have led to it—and I find none. Your empty chair mocks me at my fireside, and I have not even the refuge of self-reproach. The incomprehensible cruelty of life is making me old and weary. . . ."

Adrienne laid down the letter—it was written in a smooth, non-committal business hand—ashamed of her tears. She divined, clearly enough, the calculated pathos of Hugh's words, and yet they were hauntingly upon her. Her resistance, she saw, wavering even now, would be subtly broken down, the more easily as she had not the courage of her instincts. She dared not wholly to trust her gathering suspicion that she was in the presence of conscious melodrama, dared not risk torturing a human soul, and that soul her husband's. To pray for hardness of heart would be inhuman. And all the while the heavy silence of her rooms weighed upon her. Without, the blithe world laughed and lived. To escape the beating of her heart, the ticking of the clock, that, after all, was her most insistent need. Aimless wandering, indifferent faces—to what good? To meet Hugh would compromise, beyond recall, the dignity of the situation. Very well, then! Once resolved, the very physical objects about her seemed to brighten and grow clearer in outline. Whatever vulgarity she might be guilty of, whatever sharp disappointment might come, she had emerged from the dim shadowland of the preceding weeks. She drew a deep breath of relief and accepted Hugh's invitation to dinner.

They met, as had been agreed upon, at a certain downtown corner. The scent of flowers and well-groomed humanity in the clean air was grateful to Adrienne as the savor of the sea to one whose childhood knew the great waters. The ebb and flow of life intoxicated her. How sharp and clear the electric lights were! With how graceful a sweep Broadway curved onward to Times Square and to the brilliant consummation of the Hotel Astor with its myriad lights! All evidences of the day's toil were exquisitely eliminated. The street lay before them, immaculate, graceful, bland. Adrienne drew a deep breath. She had come home.

Sitting opposite her husband in the restaurant, she looked for the first time straight into his face. There were lines of a vague trouble about his eyes, annoying in their indefiniteness—lines, not of some keen sorrow, but of a half-puzzled self-compassion. The somewhat hard gleam of his eyes, the slight compression of the lips, seemed, somehow, to tell a different story. He pitched his voice even higher than was usual with him.

"So you condescended to come!"

Adrienne looked hard at the empty oyster-shells before her. The old irritation at his voice and manner was coming soon, accentuated by her consciousness of his being, by her very presence, master of the situation.

"You are not glad then?" she asked.

"Oh yes, but I can't help feeling your air of condescension."

"I'm sorry——"

"But you can't help it. Oh, I dare say not."

"You can understand," Adrienne ventured, "that it wasn't easy to come. Can you imagine anything more extraordinary than our situation, or, in a way, more absurd? We shall be seen and our separation will strike everyone as a farce—not a well-bred one."

"Why did you come if that is your attitude?"

"Because," Adrienne answered, determined not to expose her wounds,

"because, my dear Hugh, I couldn't resist your appeal."

Her mild irony deepened the moroseness of his face and manner.

"I cannot imagine anything," he said, waving his hands, "more serious than our predicament. I can't see in it the slightest element of ill-breeding. No doubt that is due to some defect in me. To reconsider the cruel and unnatural step that you have forced upon us is a matter of very deep concern to me; to you it may seem fit to jest over."

"Your sense of humor——"

"Is defective. Oh, I've heard that before!" Again he waved his hands.

The waiter came to change their plates and necessitated a brief silence. Adrienne, feeling the approach of a scene, changed the conversation to indifferent topics. Suddenly she saw her husband's eyes cloud. She had always despised him for his facile gift of tears.

"To see you sit there opposite to me," he said brokenly, "and to know you practically and legally a stranger, why, it hurts, though you don't seem to care."

He watched her large gray eyes harden a little under his softness and lack of restraint. With surprising ease he picked up again his conventional manner, playing ostentatiously with his food.

To Adrienne it seemed obvious enough, from its very title, that the play to which Hugh invited her after dinner would be a comedy. She supposed him to have procured the tickets more or less at random, and hoped that, for the evening, at least, the emotional strain had snapped. She was quite willing, eager, in truth, to gain the reward of pleasure for the outrage she had done her finer scruples in coming at all. But the overture struck her as ominous. The play rapidly became tense, melodramatic beyond endurance—a hideous emotional debauch. She strove to remain impassive under Hugh's furtive watchfulness. But the play racked her nerves. It was utterly despicable and insincere—that she knew—and yet her treacherous body

gradually broke down under its crude insistence. A passionate plea for love, not without a coarse eloquence, accompanied by an intolerable minor melody, sent shameful tears into her eyes. The tears dried in a hot flame of anger, for Hugh had burst into ostentatious sobs.

Adrienne rose at once. Her anger blinded her to the abruptness of her movements. On the street she turned and saw Hugh behind her. Her voice quivered:

"You bought tickets on purpose to drag me to that vile play, and when you saw its shameful effects on me, you made a scene. Oh, it was loathsome! I am bitterly punished for having come."

"I know I am not very strong, Adrienne, but my love for you is the source of my weakness. I didn't know about the play."

He waved his deprecating hands at no one in particular, for Adrienne was gone.

IV

UPON reflection, the hot anger past, Adrienne's distinct perception of her husband's duplicity became blurred. She found herself harassed by recurrent doubts. However distasteful to her its manifestation, might she not, after all, be in the presence of a genuine sorrow, and was not her present empty and aimless existence more futile and unworthy than resolute self-effacement for another's sake? The glory of freedom had proved a bitter bondage. Perhaps her married life would have been more bearable had she consciously sacrificed herself to Hugh's happiness. He was, to be sure, a sorry shrine at which to consume one's vital flame. That, however, Adrienne reasoned, was not her affair. She sought her own salvation; if it were possible only through his—that rested with Fate. But all these tortuous reflections prisoned her cruelly. She hungered for life and love—love, long a forlorn hope to her—and rebelled

against the coiling snakes of thought that stole in and out of the convolutions of her brain, and seemed to approach, with their relentless fangs, the very seat of her being. Perceptible lines showed in her delicately molded face. She knew herself impulsive, generous, human, fit to enjoy or to console, not for these dim days in which long introspection became an almost physical pain, and the lonely hours bred monstrous desires and imaginations.

As a last resort, she sought out Mrs. Poynter. That impassible lady of the large, smooth face, offered her a cup of tea.

"You look played out."

Adrienne nodded.

"I haven't had a pleasant time."

"Hugh Baron is not a pleasant person from your account."

"You are right. I've seen him, and—and—don't know whether he's real or not."

Mrs. Poynter frowned slightly.

"You are distressingly young," she said, with mild deprecation, "distressingly. Life is a huge masquerade. It's hard enough for the individual to tell whether he's 'real,' as you call it or not—to differentiate pose and seeming from sincerity, whatever that may be. But some masks fit; others have an annoying habit of slipping and wobbling. I suspect that Hugh's is a misfit. Do you suppose *he* knows what in him is sincerity and what sham? Oh, that doesn't exonerate him, poor fellow! Life's a stage-manager with a keen eye for effects. If you can't go through your part consistently you come to grief. What I'm trying to show you, my dear, is that you're setting out to solve the insoluble."

"Then how am I to deal with the situation?"

"Find out from your own soul, if you haven't done so already, whether his shiftness and inconsistency are finally unbearable to you or not. Does he still write to you?"

"Yes, and such pitiful letters. He seems lost without me. If only I were sure of it!"

"You may be. Quite. His occupation's gone. Oh, I told you that before."

"And is that all?"

"Probably. Yes, now your vanity is touched. You wish to be loved for yourself alone. What, pray, does that mean? Hugh needs you for your capacity of being annoyed."

Adrienne's heart sank.

"My dear," said Mrs. Poynter, and her face lost something of its accustomed blandness, "there are better things in life than these poor husks of knowledge I've given you. But your husband is a very ordinary person whom the cap fits. Come and stay with me. I do not think we should regret the arrangement."

"I can't," said Adrienne, "I must know more; I must give him another chance."

"And then another, and another, and another?"

"I don't know, I don't know. Life is so difficult!"

"Pshaw!" said Mrs. Poynter.

Adrienne walked home by the river. The air was still cold, but with an indescribable yearning in it, as for the approaching Spring. She broke a pendent twig from a tree and saw the gentle rising of the sap. The sun was setting through a sky of smoky and burnished gold; a single star, miraculously clear and luminous, burned overhead. In these august and simple presences Adrienne's soul rebelled against her friend's subtle and sophisticated philosophy. So real as the enduring stars, so sure as the return of Spring, unwithheld by the faithfulness of the universe forever—so real, so sure must be the elemental affections of the soul. Though she carry in her heart through all years to come an unappeased hunger, she would not accept an unworthy offering of love; she would not gloss over sham and insincerity, and lose, at last, by such continual consent, the integrity of her own being. She saw herself abandoning, in the course of many days, one vital distinction after another, and growing capable, perhaps, of a duplicity akin to

her husband's own. For in her reaction against her friend's sad wisdom, and under the strengthening influence of changeless and eternal things, she regained a final and decisive sense of that duplicity, as it appeared in every line of his face, in every spoken and written word. Under the starry sky and the broad sweep of winds, bearing afar the keen fragrance of the sea, Adrienne had one hour of spiritual lucidity, and of that liberation which hitherto she had hoped for and had sought in vain. The difficulty of life no longer oppressed her; her course was plain. She would see her husband once more and strive to speak the final word calmly and dispassionately. She walked home slowly, through the falling darkness, and slept in peace.

V

SHE was quite aware of Hugh's incredulity of the firmness of her decision. A straightforward course of action was beyond his imagination. His insight, she knew, was limited to qualities akin to his own. There lay the difficulty of the situation she had to face.

The morning of that, to her, so momentous day was mild but clouded. It was not yet warm enough for the rain to fall from the saturated sky, the day remained dim and shadowy, and it was only by a distinct effort that she treasured some remnant of that calm exaltation which had been hers under the stars of the river. She hoped for the rain, since he had requested her to take a last walk with him, and she, though divining in his request some not too honest purpose, had consented.

His behavior when they met was of a sad and delicately formal courtesy, his expression that of a man determined to bear, with quiet dignity, an inevitable misfortune. Silently he gave her a few early flowers. They found themselves, presently, walking along the low stone parapet of Central Park, under the small trees that were beginning to show hundreds

of tiny buds. Adrienne dared hardly to breathe. Her husband's sad silence created about them an atmosphere that distressed her unspeakably. His perfect self-possession seemed to create a new element in the situation—an element for which she was not prepared. When at last he spoke, in a subdued voice, it was of the signs of the approaching Spring, of meeting again a chance acquaintance, of the difficulties of his daily work. Here, at last, he approached the subject of their thoughts.

"I've worked recently with only half a mind," he said, "and the office feels it."

"Yes?" Her cheeks burned at her little quaver of sympathy. It was so inadequate if his attitude were genuine. All certainties, so clear and firm before, clouded again.

"You see," he continued, "I'm nearly forty now and an increasing strain makes itself felt. I often feel very tired and old."

The note was forced a little beyond his immediate intention. He stopped abruptly with a scarce noticeable gasp, and changed the subject, giving her no time to answer. Adrienne glanced at him. He did look peaked, poor fellow, and his clothes were in some disorder. Was it possible? Would she never have an unerring insight into him? He felt her look and gnawed at his mustache as if restraining an emotion that threatened to stretch out his hand, and his face brightened perceptibly as he felt on the open palm a heavy drop of rain.

"It's going to pour in a few minutes," he said briskly. "Suppose you come over to the house. The third corner from here is ours, and—and you can take a last look."

Adrienne felt ensnared and followed him in silence. When she stood before the house she was surprised at the brightly lit windows. The rain had not increased, but she was helpless. The strength and decision for an abrupt parting here, and a probable consequent scene, were lacking.

"Come in," he said hoarsely.

He led the way to the illuminated drawing-room. On the mantel-shelf stood her picture wreathed in flowers. Its saliency was enhanced by every fold of the drapery, by the disposition of every knick-knack—in ways more delicate than she would have expected of him. Yet, in its essence, the device was pitifully crude. He leaned against the mantel and watched her, holding himself well in hand. The appropriateness of his whole attitude was complete.

A brief silence sufficed to render the scene and all that had led to it luminous to Adrienne. It was flagrantly pre-arranged and calculated—all of it. Any hint of pathos or pitifulness seemed to fade from Hugh as he stood there beside the strident portrait. He noted, in the tense silence, the change in her and, suspecting his defeat, drooped. His muscles seemed to relax slightly, and his carefully trained nether lip hung limp and weak. A sudden disgust seized Adrienne and indignation at having permitted herself once more, if only for one brief hour, to be duped. Her usual adroitness seemed to leave her. No tactics occurred to her, at once fine enough and sharp for the situation. The silence lengthened and became like lead. But inadvertently, and through sheer helplessness, she had chosen, as a few minutes revealed, a wonderfully potent course. Hugh's attitude disintegrated more and more, and dislimned entirely under her lucid gaze. A familiar vindictiveness came to his aid, creeping, in a way she knew, oh, so well, into his pale eyes. The mask (how, in spite of herself that phrase returned) the mask was slipping! But never before had the entire grossness of his change of front or the malice which was his only defense

when the mask of the gentleman slipped, struck her as so entirely unendurable.

"Where's your famous fine feeling? Isn't there anything here that appeals to you? I would have thought such callousness impossible!"

"Yes?" Adrienne was determined to let him reveal himself fully.

"Yes! I dare say you have been very happy emancipated from every proper duty. But a man has some rights. If I were not a fool I would not have given you this chance, in kindness!"

"So it was a carefully prepared chance? Hugh, why do you want me?"

His confusion exasperated him.

"Because I want you, damn it! because it is my right! I'm tired of trying to conciliate you," he waved a long, loose hand toward the picture, "and you thank me by deliberate affronts. I don't see why you should go off and do as you please while my whole life is disorganized and I have no one to complain to——"

"And of whom to make a scapegoat," Adrienne broke in swiftly. "It is for that that you have valued me; it is for that that you want me. I wouldn't confess it before, but I've been lonely and unspeakably wretched. All my hopes have failed me, and yet I would rather go back to the life of the past few months than to become again the creature of your caprices—an alternate stimulus and foil! I've been full of kind and pitying thoughts of you, but your falseness is unbearable!"

He stretched out his hand, but she was gone. His quiet gaze fell upon the picture, and for the first time a genuine pang, acute and unmistakable as a physical pain, passed through his heart.



AUTO-SUGGESTION

"RATHER odd, isn't it, that Goggles should name his automobile after his wife?"

"Well, he says he is never able to manage the pesky thing."

A CONSPIRACY INHIBITED

By Inez Haynes Gillmore

HE came swinging out of the Flat-iron Building into a piercing hurly-burly of sound and color and movement. He paused a moment to breathe the whipping briskness of the air, his alert, wide-open blue eyes surveying the scene with every appearance of appreciative enjoyment. He dropped into the current presently, and, at a leisurely gait, permitted it to bear him downtown.

Suddenly he started, clapped his hand, as if in tardy remembrance, to an inner pocket and drew out a letter. It was big and square, superscribed in a hand so dashing and large-lettered that it had the effect of pushing the special-delivery stamp quite off the surface. He had just inserted a vandal finger under the flap when his glance, playing casually ahead, caught on that, in the crowd, which impelled him to put the note back, unopened, into his pocket.

She was strolling uptown. There was the same appearance of uncertainty in her graceful, unhurrying gait that marked his own. In the vari-colored human surge, her mouse-like appearance made a detail of contrasting and delicate charm.

She was dressed all in gray—gray broadcloth suit, gray shoes, a chinchilla turban with a saucy gray plume, a chinchilla scarf, crossed on her shoulders and falling to her waist, a huge heart-shaped wad of chinchilla, that was a muff, suspended from her neck by a silver chain.

Her expression was unworldly, almost spiritual. It contrasted piquantly with the *chic* smartness of her clothes. Drifting nonchalantly from person to person, her look was arrested at his

face. There, as if a little puzzled, it paused an instant.

A curious impulse caught him. It ran riot in his brain for a white-hot instant. It crystallized into a definite intention. He stopped at her side.

"I beg your pardon." His tone was pleasant and filled with an easy deference. "I'm sure that I've met you somewhere, haven't I? Will you let me walk up the Avenue with you?"

The girl stared at him aghast.

He was a tall fellow, his clean-shaven, fair skin browned and reddened by an unseasonable burn. He had a stalwart, well-shaped figure, running a good deal to shoulder. His short crop of hair fitted his head like a cup of gold.

Her stare lasted an instant. Then a haughty color flared into her face. It wiped out the look of aloofness in its expression and brought out the pride in it. "Certainly *not*!" she flung freezingly to him.

He resumed his hat equably. Her shocked profile darted past him. It paused halfway.

"Yes," she suddenly conceded, turning impetuously to him, "you *may* walk a little way with me. I would like to have a few minutes' conversation with you."

He placed himself at her side. She walked a few moments in silence. He waited.

The early November twilight was trembling in solution in the air. A heavy gray sky sagged low over the cañon-like sides of the streets and held down their roar. Here and there, a roof prematurely lighted, embroidered it with the glittering letters of an electric sign. An inextricable tangle of

cars, carriages and automobiles strained Broadway and Fifth avenue to the spilling-over point. The sidewalks bordered them with parallel human currents. All these streams met at Twenty-third street, eddied there into a whirlpool, in which pedestrian appeared to wrestle with vehicle, then bisected each other and continued smoothly onward.

"I'll cross here, I think," she commanded curtly. "You understand you are to leave me the moment I desire it. Thank you, I can take care of myself," as he made a movement, involuntary on his part and purely benevolent, destined merely, as he explained with humility, to prevent her from being "chewed" by the two automobiles that had, simultaneously, marked her for their prey.

She received this elucidation in oppressive silence. She threaded for herself a composed and skilful way until they reached the sidewalk.

He observed that her hair was soft and dusky. It broke primly from each side of the milky part, that protruded in front of her hat, fell to her ears, broke there into an incipient riot of curls, subsided into waves and retreated, entirely quelled, into a decorous plaited mass in her neck.

"Now," she began imperiously, turning on him with a suggestion of menace in her air, "will you kindly tell me why, out of all the women on Broadway, you selected *me* to approach in that insufferable way?"

He looked embarrassed.

"Well—I—the fact is—I—I——"

"The fact is," she took it up heatedly, "that after looking me all over, you concluded that I was the kind of girl who would respond to such an overture."

Her face flashed indignantly up in his direction and then away. He saw that the light glinted through the transparent bridge of her disdainful little nose.

"I thought nothing of the kind," he asserted with equal spirit.

"Oh, then you did do me the honor to decide that I looked respectable?"

"Of course, I did. There was no question in my mind about your respectability."

"You did it to annoy me, to frighten me, then?"

"Oh, I say, I'm not that particular kind of a blackguard."

"But you deliberately chose to insult me. I think I'll deliver you into the hands of the first policeman we come to."

Her tone was vicious with steady intention.

"You may—if you want to," he conceded grovelingly. "You'll have to appear in the Jefferson Market Court against me, and I'm afraid they will put you in the newspapers. But don't mind me, if that's the only thing that will satisfy you. Do you object if I resist arrest, though? I've always thought I would like to lick one New York policeman before I die. I suppose my mother'll feel pretty bad, especially as I've just come back from a trip round the world and haven't seen her for nine months. But I'd like to have you meet her. You'd like each other—I can see that. She's the Spartan kind; she'll agree with you. She'll say I got only my just deserts. But I shall maintain to my dying day that I never meant to insult you."

All the way, he had been taking stealthy peeps at her profile. Now he looked straight ahead. His manner was absolutely serious, ponderously penitent.

"But if you could only tell me *why* you did it," she persisted. "You don't look like a mere vulgar villain. That's why, in a way, I condescended to let you right yourself in my eyes."

"Heaven knows, I'm trying hard enough to do that. But I can't seem to say the right thing. This is the first time in my life that I ever spoke to a girl that I wasn't sure about. Now, doesn't that mitigate some?"

"But why weren't you sure you couldn't speak to me?" she demanded with ruthless feminine logic. "Why—why, that's the most insulting thing you've said yet! Why should you choose me to be the first to be uncertain

about?" She paused. "Was it my manner?" she demanded icily.

"Your manner is perfect."

"Was it the way I carried myself?"

"Certainly not. You carried yourself as every well-bred girl does."

"Then it was my clothes." Under her passionate arraignment of him, her voice had a sub-current of conviction. For an instant she stopped short. Her look was a dagger of interrogation thrust sideways at him.

Her skin was amber with an infusion of cream. He made the charming discovery that it was embroidered delicately with freckles. A row of them filed across her haughty nose and nestled in tiny colonies on her smooth cheeks.

"Listen," she pushed on rapidly, "when we get level with the mounted policeman at the corner you must leave me. But before you go, I would like to say—this is the real reason why I wished to speak with you. I've come on to New York to be maid-of-honor at the wedding of a friend of mine. I live in a little town in—a long distance from here. I have been very busy doing some charitable work for a year, and I was in mourning anyway, so that when my friend's invitation came, I had no pretty clothes to wear—not a *thing*. Grandma told me to wait and buy my clothes in New York, and I came on a week ahead, just for that purpose. But, if you can understand it, I'm the kind of girl who *hates* to shop—"

"I never heard of such a thing in my life," he commented meekly.

"You see, I never know *what* to buy. Oh, no more than a baby! I never *have* known. Yesterday I went about from store to store until I was ready to drop. I could not find anything I liked; New York is so different from Boston, and then, everything looked so ultra. The girls who waited on me would tell me that perfectly dreadful things were becoming to me when I knew they couldn't be. Oh, I got so discouraged!"

"You poor thing—you ought to have had me along. I've just been on

a shopping spree with my cousin in Paris. I'm an authority on Winter fashions. I could answer any number of those letters you read on the woman's page—'Wild Rose: Take out the sleeves of your last year's waists and turn them upside down.' But go on."

"In despair, I went to the matinee. It was 'Rose Leaves.' In the second act, in the afternoon-tea scene, there was the dearest little girl I ever saw in a suit all of gray. Oh, she was such a pretty, dimply little thing! And she looked charming—I was simply crazy about her. Now, if somebody will only give me an idea about clothes, I can carry it out as well as anybody. I got it into my head that I wanted a gray suit just like hers. Yesterday I went out and bought recklessly all the things that I wanted, as much like hers as I could. They came home this afternoon. I put them right on and then, as I had plenty of time, I started out for a walk. But, do you know, simply *everybody* stared at me. Oh, it was so embarrassing! I began to wonder if it was my clothes—people don't look at you like that in Boston. I don't know what grandma would say if she knew I copied an actress. And then—and then—I saw you coming. I thought you looked so jolly and nice—as if really nice girls knew you—"

"They do," he assured her promptly. "You never met a man who's known so many nice girls."

"When you spoke to me, it nearly broke my heart, because I knew then that there was something wrong. And, although you're afraid to tell me, I understood at once. I know that you don't think I look quite like a nice girl."

The words had poured out, molten with appeal and staccato with notes of high emphasis. She looked entreatingly at him.

"I'll tell you exactly why I spoke to you," he said simply. "I did not tell you when you first asked me because what happened to be the truth, in my case, is what men always say under these circumstances. I was afraid you

would not believe it. You caught my eye at once, because you seemed such a mouse of a creature—that gray is so soft. Then—I have always liked women to part their hair in the middle. As you came nearer, I had—I honestly had—a sudden conviction that I'd met you somewhere, though I couldn't, of course, think where. I spoke to you on impulse. It was a queer business. I don't understand now why I did it. The moment the words were out of my mouth, I knew, definitely, that I'd never seen you before. I was sorry—on my honor. But I was first attracted to you, believe me, because you looked so girlish—so different. I think your new clothes are all right."

"Oh, I'm so glad. I should have felt uncomfortable all this evening if you hadn't said that. You see, my friend is the best-dressed girl I know. You're sure that you're telling me the truth?"

"Quite sure." His sidewise glance surveyed her swiftly. "That coat's a corker! In Paris the girls are wearing rigs that look just like it. The sleeves are all right—and I understand that's a life and death matter. You see, my cousin and I looked at two hundred and eighty-nine thousand, seven hundred and fifty-one coats. I know what I'm talking about."

"They said the suit came from Paris, but, of course, one never knows. I never spent so much money in my life before—at least never just for clothes. But grandma said I was to have everything I wanted this time, no matter what it cost. You know Massachusetts girls don't think so much about clothes—grandma thinks it's vulgar. I do, too." Her look grew brooding. "And when," she sighed, "you think of all the poor there are in the world— But I'm very much obliged to you. I'm not nearly so angry as I was at first. And you see, we've reached the policeman who was to mark the limit of our acquaintance."

"I'm entitled to about a rod more of acquaintance," he maintained frowningly. "Your own words were, 'When

we get level with that mounted policeman,' and we're not level with him yet."

"Very well." She shut her lips with what was, palpably, a malicious intent of silence. Involuntarily they both fixed their eyes on the policeman, as rigid as a uniformed dummy, upright in his saddle. Suddenly he came to life, wheeled about and galloped up the Avenue.

"Aha!" he said exultantly, "if you're a gentleman, you've got to wait until we catch up with you."

She smiled in spite of herself. But she stopped. "Good-bye," she said inflexibly.

"Oh, I say——"

"You'll not compel me to take the stage."

He lifted his hat resignedly. She nodded and walked on.

In an instant quick footsteps overtook her. "I'm very sorry to trouble you again," he began, a statement that his dancing eyes made no effort to reinforce. "You dropped this handkerchief out of your muff."

She was shocked. "Did I? What a goose!" She flamed. "Of course you know I didn't do it on purpose."

"Of course. Do you mind if I follow you a little way, just for protection? You might lose your muff—or—or——"

"I might cast a shoe," she flashed.

"Surely, you won't send me away again when the fates——"

She looked ahead with a little maddening judicial air. The street lights, in globes of blue radiance, looped together by the silver fringes that the thick dusk made of their rays, ran up past the Park and into the very sky. Between them the teeming street glittered like an open kaleidoscope.

"Do you see that branch projecting over the path in the Park—the one with the ring of people about it?"

"Yes."

"You may walk with me until we stand directly under it—not an inch farther."

He studied the inexorable distance. "Do you mind my walking very slowly, as I have a weak heart?"

"Do you mind if I don't talk any?" she returned craftily, "I'm very tired."

"I'll talk to *you*," he offered with alacrity. "Do you know that I think Boston is an awfully nice old town. I've often thought I'd like to explore it. Only I could never get around alone. It's so much like walking in a maze—I wonder they don't charge an admission. No matter what direction you take you always come back to the place that you started from. If I only had someone to show me about, I'd make a study of the historical places in Boston—the Old North Church and Bunker Hill and—and—the Liberty Bell."

"Philadelphia."

"Well—the Old Manse."

"Concord."

"The House of Seven Gables, then."

"Salem."

He made a despairing gesture. "There, you see now how much I need instruction. I know I don't half appreciate Boston. But, honest, I love that air of quiet and calm that hangs over it. It's like a mammoth sanatorium. Pompeii, this Summer, seemed so rapid and hectic beside it. I never found anything that you could really compare to Boston, except some places in Egypt. They have that same intellectual chill. But then they ought to have it; *they've* been in ruins three thousand years."

Her lips twitched. She quickened her pace.

"You ought not to walk so fast as you do," he remonstrated. "You'll have walker's cramp some day—you mark my words."

"We are approaching the selected branch," was her reply. "Remember, the moment we get under it—" She glued her gaze to it.

He too fixed a pessimistic eye ahead. "Curses!" he began with melodramatic fervor and, "Good work!" he ended with a grin.

This, because the branch, as if blasted by his malediction, fell with a sudden crash to the ground. The man with a saw who, sitting close to the

trunk, came into their range of vision with their next step, began his preparations to climb down.

"You said I didn't have to go until we stood directly under it. Now how can I?"

"Well, I—I—" She gave her comment up. "Anyway," her desperation was evident, "you'll have to leave me soon for I'm almost there. It's somewhere in the Sixties, I think. You're not going to insist on going to dinner with me, are you?"

"I'm not sure yet."

She had been fumbling in her muff. She brought out a note, a crumpled creamy sheet. She began, with much turning of leaves, to search for an evasive, mysterious something from among the interlacings, interlinings and underscorings of a big-lettered, dashing hand.

He watched her curiously at first, then with a start.

"By every sign and token of long-distance signaling—that's Bettina Thorpe's handwriting," he commented casually.

She stared.

"Oh, I've got my credentials with me, too. There's no reason why this Peace Conference shouldn't get busy." He drew an unopened letter from his pocket and thrust it under her bewildered eyes.

"By Jove! I guess I'd better read that," he exclaimed.

"How perfectly ridiculous!" Her breath came in gasps. "Why, I can't believe it—it's too silly!"

"Bettina ought to serve a can-opener with her stationery," he complained, tearing at the flap, "or a little dynamite. Ah!" He ran hungrily through the note and then burst into a roar. "I know who you are," he informed his companion, his face brightening with mischief. "You're Patricia Otis. Listen to this:

"DEAR DUKE: I've been 'phoning you like all possessed ever since I heard of your arrival, yesterday morning. But nobody knew where you were. Come to 879 Sixty-third street to dinner tonight with Bob and me, if it's a possible thing, to meet Patsy Otis, who's being maid-of-honor next week,

at the chief social event of the season. I've always told you you'd go crazy over her, and here's your chance.

"Hurriedly, BETTY."

He jammed the letter back into the envelope. "You see, I've simply got to go to dinner with you."

"Are you Duke Grayson?"

"I am."

"Betty never told me you were coming tonight. But then, of course, she knew I wouldn't be there. I have always refused to meet you."

"Same here!" he agreed brazenly. "She's determined to marry us, you know. *That's* why you looked so familiar. It's the pictures she showed me. I would never have suspected that you were good-looking from those things."

"Thank you. I'm not. It's these stage clothes I'm wearing. When you come to that—Betty had any number of pictures of you in her room at Bertram Hall. See here—I don't want to meet you. Oh, Betty's a schemer. You wait until I get alone with her! If I don't—I simply decline to meet you. She'll throw me at you in the most disgusting way—leaving us to tête-à-têtes, and everything like that. She hates my settlement work, you know. Her heart is set on marrying me off. She says that if I married a man like you, I'd be a different woman. Isn't it disgusting?"

"Nauseating," he agreed.

"Why, I wouldn't marry the kind of man you are for anything in the world—you're too frivolous. I have an object in life."

He applauded her. "That's right. You stick to that—no matter how many times I ask you."

She turned back and her little teeth gnawed at her underlip. "Oh, sugar!"

she burst out vexedly. She made an indeterminate movement forward and stopped. "I won't go to their dinner," she said with decision.

He had the look of one inspired. "I'll tell you what we'll do. You see how it is: here are two people conspiring against us—against your happiness and my liberty. Let's evade them by going off to dinner together. I'll call a hansom and we'll go down to the Waldorf. You can telephone Betty, so that she won't worry. There'll be nobody there to foist unwelcome gratuitous tête-à-têtes on us. That's the only way we can beat their game."

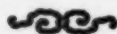
She looked at him, dumfounded. But somewhere in her expression surprise gave way to a kind of perplexed thoughtfulness that betokened that his scheme was being considered. This was broken and vanquished by a smile, mischievous, appreciative. The latter was reinforced by determination.

"I don't know what grandma would say," she said defiantly, "but, anyway, I'm going to do it. I'll tell Bettina that I've met you by accident, that we understand each other and her, and that we see right through all her plans. And if she has any idea of poking us off into corners to fall in love with each other, she can just give it up, because we absolutely refuse to do it."

"That's the stuff." He raised an alert finger to the hansom that had assiduously trailed them up the Avenue.

But six months later, when Bettina Bosworth received a certain inevitable announcement, she only smiled placidly.

"I'd give a good deal to know whether she dropped that handkerchief on purpose," she said to Bob.



DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND

MRS. GRAMERCY—I suppose your husband often deceives you by not telling you the truth.

MRS. PARK—Yes, dear, and I deceive him by letting him think I believe him.

"A FOOL THERE WAS"

By Edna Kenton

WHEN Kipling's "Vampire" first appeared, Minard sat down with his copy of it, and smote himself hip and head with joy and eating regret. All his life long, he asserted, he had felt it, every whit, and had merely lacked the one thing needful, divine words!

Minard bought one of the first copies of it which came out between covers. Later he had that copy specially bound, by some foreign genius who took his patron's measure, and set his price according. This copy lay on Minard's pet table, and was shown time over to all his guests and chance visitors. Not that Minard needed the copy personally, for with his second reading of the poem, "The Vampire" was his for all time.

From another foreign source he promptly invested in a fine copy of the Burne-Jones sensationalism, and thereafter it was worth the price of admission to any Broadway play to look upon Minard striking an attitude before his shadowy picture of a thin lady, and thereafter proceeding to recite—never the poem in consecutive entirety, but the poem bit by bit, done into an esthetic hash. Some of his discriminating and loudly applauding friends preferred to all else his rendition of the first line:

"A fool there was, and he said his prayer."
Others insisted that there was nothing then on the stage to equal the maniacal scorn which Minard succeeded in infusing into

"A rag and a bone and a hank of hair."
Dimmick said that Minard's interpretation of

"But the fool he called her his lady fair!"

was not to be matched by Irving's mightiest mouthings. Little Bunton—called Bunny, of course—laid his sandy head upon a convenient resting-place and wept whenever Minard, not only in recitation, but in ordinary conversation remarked:

"'Even as you and I!'"

That phrase indeed became Minard's most cuttingly cynical remark.

Now all this preceding jaunt afield has gone for naught if it has not shown first of all that Vynne Minard was young, although he himself would assert that it indicated, first of all, a most superior cynicism. But, being young, he had no deep wells of experience from which to draw, and therefore, since cynicism was his aim, he was entitled to the great credit of having achieved it, since he was certainly not born to it, considering that his race was of Presbyterian temper from the time of Calvin; and since it had in no way been thrust upon him. He had achieved it, too, at twenty years of age, for he was only so old when Mr. Kipling was moved to give "The Vampire" to a masculine world until then void of fit expression for its mute convictions; and he was even then reeking with diatribes against women in general—he did not know much or many of them in particular, being a clean-lived youth in the main, and being given to earnest work rather than to the pink tea or the pink claret life. He was, in fact, a most promising young art student, and it was owing perhaps to his early and quite painless attack of cynicism that his work showed such marvelous technique. For women are distracting creatures, and

Minard was a youth of the type which all women incontinently adore.

As the years went on, his technique developed as did his cheerful cynicism. His portraits became something of a rage, and he declared openly and without shame that all women, on the publication of "The Vampire," became forever divided into three classes: "rags," or "bones," or "hanks of hair." There was no doubt, of course, about the class into which the super-thin ladies fell, and, with superb ignoring of the flesh, he designated plumper womankind by "rags" or "hanks," according as their dresses or their tresses dominated their personal appearance. Yet no slim woman thing he had ever met dreamed that she was to him a "bone" and nothing more, for Minard was charmingly deferential to them all, being himself a boy utterly charming—not even his two or three enemies denied him that epithet, fond and foolish as it sounds—and his friends and enemies were alike faithful to him in not betraying to the women who swarmed about him his primitive classifications of them.

He became at last a painter of women, a truly realistic painter of women, and almost a fad. From this latter dark gulf of certain oblivion his own fairly good stock of common sense saved him, aided by Dimmick's and Bunton's jeers. These faithful friends jibed at his success as they had jibed at his failures, and Minard laughed at it all and at them, for jeering meant in prosperity precisely what it had meant in the comparative adversity through which they had come together, a quinine-coated, medicinal devotion.

They were gathered together in Minard's studio one night, self-invited critics of an all but finished portrait, a presentment of one Miss Lynette Gyles, the betrothed of the Duke of Chester, over which Miss Gyles and all the Gyleses and the blasé duke himself raved to self-suffocation. On the strength of that certain fame which would attend the successful filling of this order young Minard had moved out of his rough, student-day quarters

which he had inhabited up to this time, and took possession of his entrancing suite further uptown, a studio large enough to swallow up any three he had ever worked in before. His recent acquisition of a new, or rather exceeding old, Persian prayer rug was offered as the surface excuse for his friends' descent upon him, but once inside they pushed the easel into a fascinating light, and sat down before it to smoke and comment at their ease.

"She's a stunner!" admitted little Bunton, after a long, long look. Little Bunton was still doing courageous marines, and adding them patiently to his stock in hand. "Worthy of all that technique. She's enough to make me wish I was a duke, by George, and that's certainly a concession."

"That neck bone's a peach!" growled Dimmick gloomily. "It's beautiful."

"For God's sake," whispered little Bunton, "don't say 'bone' to Vynne. Haven't you savvied yet? That girl's mighty near got him worked off that line of talk."

Minard was sprawled along his couch, squinting his eyes ecstatically at his work. At Bunton's loud whisper he grinned a bit.

"You can wish you were a duke—" he said kindly. "But, considering the magic days are ended, you've got the best of the bargain in not getting your wish. A painter's like a doctor—he knows his subjects. Miss Gyles wears beautiful rags and's got gorgeous bones—"

"And a rippin' hank of hair!" put in Dimmick longingly.

"But when that's said, all's said," asserted Minard cheerfully. "Nobody's pretending that she's doing anything but selling herself to that confounded duke. She don't pretend anything more herself. She's had all the opportunities of our American princesses, and she's used 'em like they all do. She's skimmed over the surface of everything, and she don't even know that there are depths beneath. She's artificial and spineless and moralless—"

"Hark to the talk!" Bunny interrupted cheerfully. "When did you get so worked up over dead bones before?"

Minard pulled some pillows about him and lay back upon them. "Of course, it's nothing to me," he said after a bit. "Only, once in a while, when I see a face divine, I'd like to know there was something behind it which smacks of moral sense—or any sense——"

"That's all right," said Bunton suddenly. "But there's sense in that face—horse and morall!" His long finger pointed straight at the portrait under fire.

"That's right!" affirmed Dimmick quickly. "The girl's no fool, not as you've put her down. And your roundest boast is that you don't deliberately idealize—don't and won't!"

Minard frowned. "That went in the other morning," he said slowly. "Her last sitting. Or after it. We got to talking. It's got no business there—I tried to take it out yesterday, and today. If she'd had a chance she might have made something decent of herself, but this royal method of rearing is awful bad for 'em—the strongest of 'em all can't lift their silly feet from the mapped-out path, and ever since she was a child, hers have led her straight to a titled marriage. But bah—that beast! Her only shred of excuse—and others must make it for her—is that she doesn't know enough yet to read what's written on his rocky old face, and in his hard little eyes."

He stared gloomily at the portrait. Miss Gyles had given him her last sitting three days before, and the masterpiece was to have been delivered at the Gyleses' mansion within the week following. But only this evening he had received a telegram from Miss Gyles herself, saying she was leaving for Palm Beach immediately, and desiring him to retain the portrait until her return—"since you esteem it so highly," was the phrase with which the telegram ended.

Under that phrasing Minard had winced a bit. On the morning of her

last sitting, with her maid asleep at the far end of the studio, she had discovered what he thought of the type of woman which her portrait represented. She had ventured to criticize, ever so slightly, a certain metallic hardness of treatment which she felt had crept into it, and Minard had defended the treatment, first on the contradictory ground of its non-existence, and then on the grounds of realism. There had followed then a brief discussion anent soul and soullessness, at the end of which Miss Gyles had insisted on the direct application. Thereupon, for a scant five minutes, the conversation between the two, the American princess and the young, exasperated artist, was altogether lacking in those delicate veilings which have adorned general conversation between man and woman since the passing of the Stone Age. Miss Gyles was very angry, and Minard could not deny that she had full right to be. When he reflected later on his direct employing of the terms, "sale and barter," and his brief dissection of the Duke of Chester's well-known character, he wondered that she was not more angry, although he knew that greater wrath than she already felt was quite impossible. She was as angry as one could well be and not suffer immediate brain congestion.

To be sure, she had forced most of it. She had insisted on his carrying a merely suggested comparison between the beauty of her face and body and the ugliness of her sordid spirit to the full limit of verbal expression, and under the fire of her attacks Minard had risen to the occasion with a barbarous reversion to the Stone Age type. It had come on them both without premeditation, and with volcanic force and swiftness, and when the few fervid, vivid minutes were ended, they stood, not two feet apart, looking on each other with a primitive hate in their eyes, and a mighty rage tearing at their young hearts. The man's hate and rage were born, he succeeded in persuading himself by asserting it to her, of his artist's revolt against perfection of form with poverty of spirit. The girl's—who

may catalogue all the reasons for her wrath and fury! She had wakened her stupid maid, and had left immediately, without so much as a courteous farewell, and Minard had pored furiously over the portrait all the rest of that day, dabbling at it here and there—he knew he was but "dabbling," and yet he could not keep his hands away from it. He had not seen Lynette Gyles since. Today had been the day appointed for her family and the Duke of Chester to view it, but though the family party came in force, she was not of them, and Minard was heartily glad of it. The sight of her beside the Duke of Chester, with his satyr-like ugliness of soul and body, would have been more than he could stand. The entire experience had been revolting in the extreme—had been nauseating.

He stared a moment longer at the portrait, and then he got up, and deliberately turned it away from them all.

"That look in her eyes doesn't belong there," he said half to himself, "but I'm damned if I can paint it out—seeing that somehow it's crept in—to make her back again into the wax doll she is. Forget it! Are you fellows going round to Foster's stag tonight?"

II

THE three of them dropped convivially in on Foster about ten o'clock that evening. Foster himself opened the door to them, and greeted them with uproarious hilarity. "It's a sight better than a stag!" he said loudly, as he pulled their coats and hats from them. "Donaldson started the ball when he asked to bring his cousin down—Olive Fair—you fellows all knew her over in Paris, and Lord! she's as good a fellow as any man here. So I scurried up a few others of the right sort among the women, and we're having a time! Rush along, and keep the fire burning! Billy Burbank's in there too, Red Bill, with his hair in a braid! Just landed from Holland today—met him at the

club, and haven't let go of his coat-sleeve yet!"

As Dimmick and Bunton entered the low studio they were almost felled by Billy Burbank's descent upon them, and in the medley which ensued Vynne Minard glanced casually about, while waiting for his chance to greet Burbank, whose red hair had indeed been allowed to grow to preposterous length during its owner's sojourn in the bohemian circles of Holland. At the farther end of the room he caught sight of Olive Fair, in the gorgeous red which she consistently affected and which became her so perfectly, with one red-slipped foot resting on a high ottoman, and her red-tipped cigarette held with consummate grace as she renewed a ten-year-old flirtation with Godfrey Sterans, a playwright of parts.

His cool eye ranged over the other men and women there. He caught a brief glimpse of Dolly Flower, with her black, black hair, and her red, red lips, cheekily slanging Doddy Streeter. He did not hear a word she was saying, but he smiled in spite of himself at the thought of what it must be. Laura Heyworth was there, dark and silent, almost glowering, yet a social power as potent as her painting. She was watching Fife Randall as he did a famous "stunt" of his, and Minard smiled again as he watched her moving lips, and imagined her acid comment. She openly loathed "stunters."

And then, suddenly, his eyes fell on a face apart, alone, and he uttered a low exclamation of sheer surprise. Even while Burbank, having released Dimmick and Bunton, was smiting him brutally on the back, and shaking him brutally by the hand, Minard still stared over Burbank's hair-swept shoulder at the face of the girl—the only feminine thing in the room who by any stretch of speech could be called a girl. All the others were women of the world. She was the pure Madonna type, oval-faced, luminous-eyed, with hair of shining gold. She wore a dress of dull blue crêpe and her hands were perfect.

"Who is she?" Minard found himself

asking vacuously of Burbank, as if Burbank, a wanderer just returned, could tell him. But Burbank answered promptly.

"Say, ain't she a type! Cousin of Oli Fair's—third or fourth or something—well, hang it, I never was good at dates and that! Come on over—sure, I know her—that's right, she does look sort of out of place in this gang—dandy old crowd though—tickled clear through to get back to it, old man!"

In another moment Minard dimly realized that Burbank had vanished from the immediate foreground leaving him alone with the girl whose name, as he seemed to recall it from the introduction, was Nana Wetherold. The girl's exquisite flush cast him into a swooningly sweet contemplation, which was rudely interrupted by a bit of Dolly Flower's irresistible, vulgar slanging, falling on his ears, his and this child's. He saw those blue eyes open wonderingly at Dolly, and their puzzled distress deepen as that young woman created shriek upon shriek of laughter with her bit of jugglery which intimately involved her ten fingers, four lighted cigarettes, and her cherry lips. That sort of thing was well enough, right enough, for those who understood life—and Dolly Flower! But what had Olive Fair meant, if this sweet child were indeed of her blood, by bringing her tonight to this feminized stag of Foster's! Olive understood life sufficiently well to know that there were some who did not understand, and with that knowledge she should have acted more wisely. Minard grew wrathful as he watched the slender girl. He glanced about the room, already dim with the smoke of slain cigars and cigarettes, and then he bent over her protectingly.

"There's a sort of cubby-hole out yonder that Foster calls his breakfast-room. It's liable to be free from this sort of thing." He waved his hand comprehensively about the studio. "You'll let me take you out there?"

Ah, the beauty of her, the grace of her, as she rose! Minard was prone to the critical attitude toward women as toward Woman. Of Woman he had

already, it will be recalled, an implacable opinion. Of Woman he was not a critic, but a wise philosopher or an opinionated wretch, according as a kindred spirit or women passed judgment. But when he viewed them as individuals he still weighed evidence for or against them, and the tally sheet "Pro" was pitifully bare when compared with its companion "Con." Too many failed to come up to his rigid young standards of grace and beauty, which were his vital points of judgment. In his mind women had no character, therefore why look for characteristics! He was an optimistic cynic, but a cynic notwithstanding.

But he was an esthete! He was delighted with the discovery that the blue of Foster's breakfast-room toned exquisitely with the blue of her soft falling crêpe gown; that a brass platter hanging just behind the couch she sat on made a heavenly nimbus for her head. With his tender courtesy he made her comfortable, and then he sat down beside her, and began to talk to her with that beautiful chivalry which all men of feeling bestow upon women who, through others' faults or their own ignorance, are placed in equivocal positions.

All of her life up to a few weeks preceding, he learned, she had spent in a small country town with an aunt and uncle, who, dying, left her entirely alone, with but an infinitesimally small income. By her uncle's wishes she had written the cold facts to her only living relative, Olive Fair, and while the girl was telling the sequence thereof, he leaned back and studied her more closely. He did not need to hear the sequence, for he knew, as all her world knew, Olive Fair's magnificent generosity, her splendid living-up to the doctrine of human brotherhood. Of course, to this small, terrified little stray, she offered the shelter of her home—and here, therefore, the child was, brimming with adoration for Olive, and full of wondering shyness over the glories of city life. But really, Minard reflected, Olive should have known much better than to bring such

a child to such a place, even though Olive herself were wild with eagerness to meet the old crowd again, having gone straight from her boat to that desolate country home, to bear back her little relative with her to this new life. But Olive should have made some other arrangement for this night.

Later that evening he told her so. That came after Billy Burbank had found him and Nana Wetherold out, and, by pure exercise of physical prowess, had borne the blushing child away from Minard for supper with him, a favor promised him, the girl murmured to Minard, from the evening's beginning. Minard watched the ill-assorted pair go off together—"Nymph and Satyr," he called them, with reckless insult to his good old friend, Billy Burbank. Billy was not handsome, and his figure was thick and clumsy, but the unpromising exterior concealed the warmest heart and merriest spirit which ever dwelt in man. Then, for want of Billy to score with scorn, he went to Olive Fair.

He found her just dismissing Godfrey Sterans, and he sank into Sterans's chair with a sigh of well-simulated content. So enchanting, indeed, was Miss Fair's personality, so alluring her aura, that for a moment Minard was tempted and fell. He forgot the sermon he had prepared for her, was conscious only that she was a most beautiful woman, in gorgeous bloom.

So for ten minutes he talked to her precisely as Sterans had talked to her—for he too, when a callow youth of eighteen, had had his delightful and instructive experience with Olive Fair, even then some several years his senior in point of finite time, and some several eons ahead of him in knowledge of men and women. It had been a tiny experience, and very delightful while it endured and when it ended, and he fell into the caressing note as readily as if he were still eighteen instead of twenty-eight.

And then he remembered, suddenly, Nana Wetherold.

"How could you have brought her

here, Olive!" he said with abrupt reproach. "That child!"

He looked again on the smoke-filled room; the men, one or two of them slightly exhilarated; Dolly Flower, sitting on a table, still slangily cheeking; Foster, uproariously gay; little Bunton, singing, in his mighty bass—an excruciatingly funny matter when one surveyed the small body from which it issued. Then he turned back to Olive Fair, scarlet-clad, seductive, who was gazing amusedly at him.

"Still the idealist!" she murmured. "Because this is good for her, and she wants it."

Minard frowned. Olive Fair had liked to call him the Idealist ten years back, and he had resented it then even more than he did now. Perhaps it had been the one definite thing which had started him on his still hunt after its antonym, the cynic's creed.

"It's not good for her," he said dogmatically. "For us who are older, who understand life, and know the real worth of all these people—well and good. But to a girl of your cousin's type, this must be shocking—do you think she could believe Dolly is a downright good sort, watching that!"

Olive Fair turned her dark eyes slowly upon the boon companion of her Paris days, who was dancing lightly as a flake of snow upon the table where only a moment before she had been sitting; then she looked back at Minard's earnest face, and smiled enigmatically.

"Everybody knows Dolly, of course," she said lightly.

Minard answered hotly. "That child doesn't. She was asking me only half an hour ago about all this—sort of thing! Dolly wouldn't ever do that stunt outside of this crowd, but can you possibly make a *child* understand how a thing can be relatively right! You can't. No one can. I gave up, and let Billy Burbank take her away from me. It was like explaining the ark and the whale to a wide-eyed baby fresh from its Sunday-school. At least, Olive, don't show her many places like this till I get the picture she's promised me—the darling!"

Olive Fair smiled brightly. "Innocence?" she queried.

Minard smiled back. "Really, I've been wanting her type for months, been trying to find it in town, fool that I am! I do owe you thanks for bringing her here tonight—otherwise I mightn't have seen her. Accidents like that do occur—I might never have seen her!"

"Ah, Vynne," Miss Fair murmured, "you couldn't have stayed away forever from my little place. And Nana is to be with me now until she is married—or something equally final happens."

"Until she is married!" repeated Minard. "My God! That child!"

"My dear Vynne, Nana is precisely twenty-two!" Olive Fair said meaningfully.

"Not really!" remarked Mr. Minard. "Well, what matter, when her soul is the white one of a child? Ah, no, Olive, you need not smile—how could you have brought her here!"

"Because she wanted to come," replied her cousin, lightly still. "And because it is good for her. Here she is—and I shall take your words to heart and carry her off. Do come down some night soon, or shall I come up? If you have arranged to paint Nana, the time— Oh, tomorrow morning. Very well, then; at ten—is that right, Nana? Now come, Mr. Minard says the cigarette smoke is growing too thick, darling! Come."

Minard held the girl's cool hand, watching delightedly the color creep into her cheeks as his grasp tightened. "I'll never be able to thank you for sitting for me," he said.

"Mr. Burbank was just telling that you have just painted Lynette Gyles's portrait," she said softly. "Lynette Gyles! She is to marry the Duke of Chester! How can you want to paint me?"

Minard laughed. "I know you won't believe me when I tell you I'd rather paint you than a thousand Lynette Gyleses and dukes' fiancées. No, I knew you wouldn't believe me. Bring her tomorrow, Oli, please."

He took them to the door in Foster's stead, good old Foster, who grew happier and more happy as time fled by. No one save only Olive Fair perceived how short he cut the farewells to the guest of the evening and her cousin, how unobtrusively he hurried Donaldson into his coat and found his hat for him and thrust him after his two charges into their waiting cab. Minard dreaded the effect of the evening on Nana Wetherold. It was a far harder problem to set such atmosphere right for her than to explain the ark and Jonah's whale to the most orthodox child. Yet it was a good old crowd. He smiled dreamily as he went back to the jollity and the uproarious merry-making.

III

"I THINK she is perfectly beautiful!" sighed Nana Wetherold.

"She is beautiful!" amended Minard skilfully. He glanced up at the portrait at which the girl was staring, and then continued his own work with rather feverish haste.

For ten minutes, perhaps, there was silence in the studio. She had asked him some time before if she might step down from the throne to investigate some new pottery which he had added since her last sitting. Since then she had wandered about the room with a familiarity born of intimate acquaintance therewith, and paused at last before the portrait which hung still in Minard's studio, Lynette Gyles's portrait, three months finished. In all that intervening time, since his receiving of that telegraphic message, he had heard nothing of its disposal, one way or another. Its presence made him restless, and yet he could not write to ask her wishes, in the face of her silence—and in the face of what had gone before.

But in this intervening time he had met Nana Wetherold. Ever since that night at Foster's, she had been teaching him lessons he had not learned before of Woman and her Ways. She was the

first woman he had ever met whom he believed had Character—Minard capitalized it. She was twenty-two, on Olive Fair's word of honor, and a child, a serene, spiritual child! Several times every week of these three months she had come down to his studio, always with Olive, even though Olive left her to come home alone. She never showed by tone or flush the faintest consciousness of unchaperoned moments, and Minard gloried in her stirlessness, and in these weeks painted her madly, in every conceivable manner. She had become his only model. At least, he had let go several girls of varying charms while he devoted himself assiduously to the Madonna type, to "Lilies of Innocence," and "Blessed Damozeles," and that ilk, for all of which mild mania she furnished the motif and the model. He never wearied of watching her; her cool, young, virginal calm and her faint, ever-ready flush charmed him beyond words. And many nights, after working with her all morning or afternoon, he would go down to Olive Fair's utterly charming little apartment and sit for hours, basking with the languorousness of a cat in the alluring atmosphere of the place. Olive was working hard that Winter, and was denying herself to all but a few old friends. Among these few she graciously counted Minard, with a half-smile curving her lips, an odd light in her deep eyes.

"I like to watch the process of experience," she said to him once.

He answered honestly. "I wish I could make you believe that there's not a trace of sentiment in this. I am past that sort of thing—an all-absorbing passion, Oli."

"Oh, dearest Vynne," Olive replied, that odd light deepening. "I know so well there is no sentiment in this. Believe me. It is not sentiment. You will never be in love with Nana."

That reply had annoyed Minard, satisfactory and agreeing as it sounded. He was not in love with Nana, he knew that. But he was absorbed in her. She was twenty-two, and the days of her innocence were not yet past. He

did not believe they would ever slip from her; she was wonderful, wonderful. She had told him once that she had never loved, and he found himself wishing at the queerest moments that she might never know the mighty passion. Love was wonderful, but she, without it, was more wonderful. He liked to think of her always, as he was painting her now. The very thought of her was a potent inspiration. He had done an enormous quantity of work in these two months.

Her liquid voice fell through the silence which had held them ever since she had breathed her thought of Lynette Gyles's portrait.

"I wonder," she murmured, "if you will ever tell me one thing; why you said that first night you met me, that you would so much rather paint me than—her!"

Minard went across to where she stood before the portrait. "You wonder why I would rather paint you than Miss Gyles," he said. "Well then, look at it well, beautiful as she is. Perfectly beautiful there, perhaps—a bit of soul crept in—I am sorry it did, for it is not true, but I've never had the heart to take it out. Now come over here."

He took her over to the easel where he had been working.

"I've been doing this at odd times. You've never seen it before, I know. I didn't want you to see it until it was done—it isn't finished, quite. But the face is done, and the hands—they're what matter. You don't mind? I've given you the painting you liked best for your own; I wanted one for my own, which is *you*. Here it is, and I call you what I call it—'Mystic'!"

It was one of those indescribable "type" portraits, whose entire distinction lies in the treatment. Entire distinction Minard had achieved in it. It was a *rara avis* of portraiture, and it was a far cry from an idealized head, judging sternly from the girl who stood beside him. It was all fine, but the eyes were wonderful.

"The reason why I care more to

paint you than her lies here," said Minard. "In this: soul is more than body, than raiment. You are wonderful, dear child, wonderful!"

"I don't know what you mean," she said at last. "I'm not—wonderful." Her pauses were more expressive than other women's emphasis.

Minard laughed quite fatuously—for Minard. "You are wonderfully wonderful," he said, quite subtly for a young man who scoffed at the James school of intricate mentalities. "I never knew a woman could be like you, untouched of the world. I've been almost afraid for you, of this Winter in town, with—all of us. I've never got over the shocking incongruity of your face in Foster's studio that night, with Dolly Flower dancing on the table, and everybody smoking like chimneys, and Rossiter tanked—there, there, you didn't know about that then—I'm a brute!"

She looked at him wonderingly. "I had a lovely time that night," she said simply. "You took me away from all of that, quite away, and we talked a long while together."

For the life of him Minard could not control a flattered thrill. She knew enough now at least to know that he had rescued her from the rank atmosphere of Foster's feminized stag and its contaminations. How wonderfully she had said "you!"

"And then," he continued—he did not realize how much he talked, and how perfectly she listened, "you have such simple directness of moral vision. The rest of us weigh moral values, and puzzle over relative right and wrong—and you move straight ahead in a straight line. You would never believe how often your straight seeing has dragged me out of my circles, since I've known you. And all this, which shows irresistibly in your face, makes you a worthy subject for the highest art—which she is not!" Minard was guilty of a distinctly derogatory gesture toward the portrait of Lynette Gyles to his right.

"She—not!" Nana Wetherold's eyes opened wider as she gazed, first

at the painting, then at the painter. "But why!"

"Because," said Minard harshly, "I like to paint soul, when I can find it. I like to see the glint of trailing clouds about a woman's face, and I never find it. And that girl, when she marries that titled brute this coming Summer, will be giving herself in open sale in the open market, to the highest bidder, regardless of the sort of man he is——"

"But is the duke so very bad?" murmured the girl.

"He is so bad," said Minard, "that I could never make you understand a thousandth part of his badness and I should never try to make you understand a millionth part of it——"

They both turned toward the door as it opened unceremoniously, to admit Olive Fair. Minard laughed as he saw her frowning face.

"Not out of the dumps yet?" he cried. "You went out of here a thunder-cloud this morning, and you return blacker than ever."

"I've been seeing lawyers," she returned shortly. "Yes, Nana, everything is finally settled. Come. There are a thousand things to do this afternoon."

"Do get cheerful before tonight," said Minard. "I'm coming down."

"Are you indeed!" said Miss Fair shortly. She glanced at her cousin, and that slender girl moved forward, and laid a snowflake of a hand on Minard's arm.

"Please not tonight!" she said. "I've promised Olive to go with her to a stupid party. Tomorrow night—or—" She paused uncertainly.

"Come tomorrow night at nine, Vynne," said Olive quickly. "Not a moment before, but any time after, you'll be as welcome as the flowers in May."

A brief, somewhat stormy smile lighted her face. She looked beyond him to his "Mystic," which stood out strong on its canvas, and she went over to it.

"This is 'Innocence' at last?" she queried.

Minard laughed. "It's more—it's 'Mystic'!" he said proudly. "Aren't the eyes great, Oli—and the hands! I've been trying to tell her this morning why I like her better as a subject than that yonder."

"She is to marry the Duke of Chester!" murmured Nana.

Minard nodded at Olive. "The story horrified her," he said briefly. Miss Fair stared for a second, and then managed a comprehending nod.

"Naturally!" she remarked. "Come, Nana. Not a moment before nine, Vynne," she added over her shoulder, "but as immediately after as you can come. Do excuse me until then from discussion of your 'Mystic.'"

IV

THE clock on the corner drug-store pointed to one minute before nine o'clock when Minard, the next evening, rounded the corner and turned down Olive Fair's street. He grinned at his promptness, remembering how definitely she had set the time the day before. He found himself wondering for the first time what evening affair had called them out the night previous. Either from Olive or Nana he knew most of their engagements—but he had known nothing of this one.

Near Olive's number the street lamp shed a strong light, and at a distance of one hundred feet he saw a carriage standing before Olive's apartment house, and observed two figures emerging from the entrance. Just as the woman's figure was lost in the black interior of the carriage, Minard felt his legs propel him forward at a curiously increased gait. He had recognized Nana Wetherold. This was strange—who was the man!

Minard saw him clearly, as he turned up his face, in the full glare of street and carriage lights, to give the cabman an order. Minard had never seen him before. He was old, and very fat, and very wrinkled. His chin was accordion-pleated, and the third heavy crease was adorned

with an enormous mole. Minard observed all this in the few seconds which it took to give the order. Then, just as the young man reached the carriage step, the door slammed to, and the horses struck into a smart trot.

As Minard went up to Olive's apartment he carried with him the most vivid mental picture of his life, of a florid, massive, large-pored nose projecting in gigantic fashion from between two small, pig-like eyes overshadowed with beetling white brows, the whole overhanging the three heavy red chins and the enormous mole. Olive opened the door for him, and he went directly into the matter, being intensely interested.

"I saw Nana going out this evening," he said, drawing off his gloves. "Who was the fat proposition with her, Oli? The gross beast!"

He stared helplessly at his hostess as she replied.

"Her husband!" he repeated stupidly.

"Married tonight!" he said a bit later.

"Everything about settlements arranged yesterday—according to her mandates!" he ejaculated weakly, still later.

"Sit down, Vynne, here," said Olive kindly, at this juncture. "That's right. Now don't try to talk. Just listen—it's very simple, I assure you."

Minard allowed her to designate his chair and to slip a pillow behind his whirling head. Then he listened rigorously, with a truant mind which every now and then would slip its leash and go straying off into the oddest byways and pasturings. There was quite a good deal about a love affair previous to all this—Minard wondered wearily why women could never stick to the subject in hand. Later he perceived that this previous love affair of Nana's had much to do with the last one, for the young lover had shot himself through the head in his despair over the victory which old Bradson of Chicago, up for Fall shooting, had achieved with

his millions. Minard found himself stupidly repeating the figures: fifty millions—fifty millions!

Then he listened to Olive's cool dissection of her cousin, which, for directness of method, sureness of touch and revolting facts could not be surpassed in any medical clinic the world over. Nana, it appeared by her cousin's word of mouth, was a heartless, grasping, soulless creature, greedy for luxury, a hypocrite, an all but degenerate, whom Olive had taken under her protection until her marriage with old Bradson could be arranged for, there having been a hitch over the amount of prenuptial settlements in which Nana had been victor.

He listened silently, hearing every word, yet carrying on a distinct train of thought. He was remembering how very little, in their hours together, the girl had said, of herself or of anything. At first he could not believe Olive; later he could not disbelieve. At last he lost all sense of her words, conscious only of two mental concepts set side by side: old Bradson's gross face and his own "Mystic."

He laughed at last, interrupting Olive, still engaged in her passionless dissection of Nana Wetherold. She seemed to be speaking of the girl's utter sweetness of bearing the night before, when she met old Bradson for the first time in weeks—having refused to see him until her settlements were to her liking—and Minard remembered the little party Nana was to have attended with Olive. That was the immediate cause for his laughter. But other causes rose swiftly, and he bubbled with irrepressible mirth. That he should be so befooled, after all, by this moon-eyed girl, with all his vaunted knowledge of her sex, all his understanding of their total lack of principle and character, of morals and of souls! Since his brain had been swept with his great flood of understanding of them, she was the only one who had been able to make him believe for a time in their ability to develop souls—and she was merely a soulless thing like them

all. He had honestly begun to think that what he called his philosophic cynicism was about to slip from him in the face of her spiritual graces. He had always said that he was large-souled enough to do full justice to the Perfect Woman when he met her—he had begun to fancy weird things in these last few weeks. And therefore, with this night's revelations and the memory of his "Mystic" waiting for him at home, he laughed and laughed.

"To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair!" he said at last—it had been a long, long time since he had resurrected that famous old rhyme. "Well, Olive, you've called me an idealist often and often, but you have called me that for the last time, honestly. Never, never," protested young Minard warmly, "shall I feel again that capacity for seeing the good in any woman, and shutting my eyes to the bad and the indifferent. If a man prepared for the worst can be so deceived, where is the woman who can be trusted!"

He found himself in the street not long afterward, walking rapidly. Fifty millions—that was in truth a price at which to go—enough to sell oneself to the devil—the trend of his reflections was, in very truth, of the rankest order of cynicism, and there is no need to follow it further.

When he reached his rooms he let himself into his studio. As he dropped into a chair, after turning up the lights, and casting his hat and coat to one side, he saw a creamy envelope lying on his table, which had evidently come in the late mail, and which he had not noticed before his hurried departure. With his rather unlovely sneer still on his face he picked it up, and caught his breath at sight of the postmark: "Palm Beach, Florida"! And the handwriting—Lynette Gyles had written him several delightfully cordial notes in the long ago.

He tore open the note with the same jerky feeling at his heart which he endured whenever he looked upon that portrait unexpectedly, and he read it over twice, once rapidly, once very slowly, each time, however, in the same

mental daze. In it Mr. Minard was requested, briefly, to destroy the writer's portrait forthwith, and to do her, at the same time, the favor of accepting her father's cheque for his work thereon, his acceptance thereof being Gyles père's conditional sanction of his daughter's mad whim. The letter ended briefly:

My father's second condition, that I explain to you, at least, adequately my mad whim, is unnecessary, since there is no need of explanation between you and me. We went over the ground too thoroughly at my last sitting. You made the portrait forever detestable to me—I do not wish to look on it ever again. And yet I find myself grateful, not to your motives, for they were not as high as you think them, but to the chance which flung us into that brutal moment.

Minard laid the letter down at last, upon the evening paper spread out upon the table. A heavy headline caught his eye: "Duke of Chester Jilted. Miss Gyles Announces Broken Troth."

The story followed, padded, sensational, conjectural, surmising. Minard read it standing. A life of the Honorable Duke was appended, preceded by all his honors and titles. After all, the man had a statesman's record; it would mean something to be the duchess of such a man. Brute and libertine that he might be, he had brains, ability, greatness which was genuine and self-earned, not merely the ancestral shadow. It meant something to throw such a man over—by so much did Minard feel he sensed the truth of the matter—a man to whom the Gyles wealth was but a drop, a man who Lynette Gyles had a right to feel desired her honorably, who was not marrying her for her settlements, but for herself.

Young Minard stood frowning beside the table, thinking many things. He sat down at last, still frowning, still reflecting with some earnestness and some discrimination. At midnight he drew a sheet of paper toward him, and wrote a few hurried lines, in which he

besought Miss Gyles to forgive him the liberty he was taking of sending the portrait direct to her city home. He confessed to the "dabbling" he had done after that stormy talk, and the wherefore, and he begged her to look at least once upon the result, and spare him untold humiliation by that small mercy—after that it would be hers to keep or to destroy. He added a line of heart confession which should have eased his soul but did not, and added to that a beggar's plea for one chance to tell her his realization of his brutal sinning. Then he signed his name.

He went outside his door and dropped it into the mail chute. When he came back he shut the door and barred it. The light from his table fell upon his "Mystic," the paint of whose background was not yet dry. But young Minard passed it without a flicker of expression on his face, and drew out Lynette Gyles's portrait. He did not look long upon the girl who looked deeply back on him, and he shivered when he turned away, although the room was oppressively warm. He went back to the table, and stared down at the flagrantly black headlines of the Chester story. At last he put out his hand toward the lamp.

"A fool there was!" remarked young Minard, as the flame swiftly died, and left him in darkness, and it is a noteworthy fact that in all the history of his quoting of "The Vampire," this was the time of all times on or off record when he uttered those four pregnant words out of context. A deed which is misleading always, and in this case especially so, since Mr. Kipling was speaking primarily of The Lady in Any Case, the "fool" being an all but unimportant accessory. But young Mr. Minard uttered his short quotation with decision and authority, quite as if, at last, after his eight years of ardent study, he had seen a great white light shining full upon the ringing keynote of a masterpiece.

UN NOUVEAU JEU

LES deux mains dans les poches, un cigare à large bague dans le coin de la bouche, le chapeau sur l'oreille, le gilet de smoking barré d'une épaisse chaîne d'or, il regardait d'un œil amusé les joueurs de baccara, se levant parfois sur la pointe des pieds pour mieux voir les cartes. Il demeurerait ainsi jusqu'à la fin de la partie, sans jamais risquer un jeton de cent sous, sans avoir même une seule fois l'ébauche du geste de prendre de l'argent dans son gousset.

À la mer, autour d'une table de jeu, surtout, on se lie vite; je lui dis un soir:

— Vraiment, vous m'étonnez. Je vous observe depuis plusieurs jours et j'en arrive à penser que vous êtes peut-être le seul homme que le jeu ne tente absolument pas...

Il hocha la tête et me dit:

— Vous vous trompez...

Et, comme je paraissais surpris, il ajouta:

— Seulement, je ne joue qu'à coup sûr.

Il m'avait dit cela tranquillement, sans baisser le ton, et je pensai:

— Voici un cynique drôle, un écumeur de casinos qui doit être rudement sûr de son procédé pour avoir l'audace d'en parler avec ce sang-froid.

Il devina sans doute ma pensée, car il se mit à rire.

— Non, je ne suis pas ce que vous croyez. Je ne place pas de portées sur mon paquet de cartes... Je joue — à ma façon.

— Et quelle est-elle?

— Vous allez le comprendre de suite. D'abord il ne s'agit ni de dés ni de cartes, ni de trente-et-quarante, ni de roulette.

— Un jeu nouveau, alors ?

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— Absolument nouveau, en effet. Écoutez-moi bien. Ce jeu-là se nomme, ou plutôt, je le nomme le jeu des cent-chevaux.

Je pensai, cette fois: J'ai sûrement affaire à un fou. Mais, décidément, cet homme avait le don de la seconde vue, car il lut ma réflexion aussi aisément qu'il avait déchiffré la première, et ajouta:

— Je ne suis pas fou. Rassurez-vous. Je suis un modeste inventeur. Tout au plus si j'ai un grain de génie. Je reprends. Mon jeu des cent-chevaux se joue généralement à deux. Il peut se jouer à plus, mais le nombre des participants ne change rien ni à sa théorie, ni à sa pratique. Il n'exige ni un long apprentissage, ni de grands efforts de réflexion. Dans quelques instants, vous serez à même d'y jouer aussi bien que votre serviteur.

Pour commencer la partie, il faut et il suffit d'une petite entrée en jeu de quinze ou vingt mille francs. Moins, parfois, mais ce chiffre peut être nécessaire, et il faut savoir, dans ces sortes d'affaires, ne pas y regarder à quelques centaines de louis.

Il lisait la surprise que son étrange discours causait en moi et, pour aiguillonner davantage ma curiosité, ouvrit une nouvelle parenthèse:

Notez bien qu'il ne s'agit pas ici de doubler sa mise, ce qui est une pitteuse opération. Je travaille sur de gros chiffres et ne m'arrête pas aux petites martingales qui causent plus de soucis que de profits.

— Mais, lui dis-je, je ne vois toujours pas...

— Ne vous impatientez pas. J'y suis. Suivez-moi bien. J'arrive par exemple ici, à Houlgate. La plage est jolie, les baigneurs élégants, les prome-

nades charmantes et les autos foisonnent. Enfin—et c'est là un des points les plus importants—le séjour de cette station implique certaines excursions inévitables, si j'ose dire: Villers, Trouville, Cabourg, Caen, et dans l'intérieur, cet admirable panorama de Sarlabos d'où l'on découvre la côte de Honfleur à Cabourg. Or, tous les chemins qui mènent à ces endroits sont détestables, non que la chaussée soit inégale et mal entretenue, mais parce que les tournants y sont terribles et les descentes vertigineuses. Ceci posé, je regarde, sans en avoir l'air—on me prendrait pour un provincial que tout stupéfie—les voitures qui sillonnent le pays. Je ne m'intéresse, bien entendu, qu'à celles de 60 chevaux et plus—pour les autres mon calcul est sans profit—et je m'applique à connaître le nom de leur propriétaire. C'est chose facile. Il me reste alors à entrer directement en jeu. Je n'ai jusqu'ici que battu les cartes, si j'ose dire. — Vous m'accorderez que j'arrive très aisément à mes fins. — Et un beau soir ou un beau matin, comme vous voudrez, je lance M. X..., qui pilote une Fiat 90 chevaux, sur le chapitre des qualités de sa machine. Il me parle des records qu'il bat pour s'amuser, me déclare de l'air le plus simple du monde qu'il vient de Paris en une heure quarante-cinq. Je me récrie. Il affirme. Je lui dis: — C'est impossible! — Il invoque des témoignages. Je pince les lèvres d'un air de doute. Il me propose de juger par moi-même. Je me récuse. — Il parie de faire plus fort: Houlgate-Trouville—la nuit, bien entendu, pour éviter l'encombrement des routes—en sept minutes. Je ne suis pas convaincu et j'ajoute:

— En tous cas, c'est un jeu mortel que vous jouez là.

Il éclata de rire:

— Voilà dix ans que je roule et je n'ai jamais écrasé un poulet!

Aussitôt — car il n'en démord plus — il revient à son idée:

— Voulez-vous parier que je vais à Trouville en sept minutes?

Je le prends à la blague et à mon tour lui dis:

— Eh bien, écoutez: Voulez-vous auparavant me consacrer trois jours de votre existence?

— Pourquoi?

— Le premier pour aller chez un docteur. Le second pour aller dans une compagnie d'assurances vie, et le troisième pour déjeuner avec moi. Si vous m'accordez cela, je vous parie dix mille francs que vous ne faites pas du 160 à l'heure.

— Et puis, et l'assurance, qui paiera?

— Ne vous tourmentez de rien. Tout est à ma charge. Primes, papiers. Tout, tout.

Il trouve la farce drôle. Il se prête à ce qu'il nomme mon caprice, se fait palper, ausculter, signe sa police à mon nom—qu'est-ce qu'il risque, c'est moi qui paie?—et sa machine bien réglée, se met en route. Quelquefois, le premier essai rate—il y a de ces hasards—et mon partenaire rentre sain et sauf.

— Et vous avez perdu vos dix mille francs, vous voyez que vous ne jouez pas à coup sûr...

— Mais... j'ai l'assurance, dont j'ai payé la prime énorme, c'est entendu—et le monsieur qui roule à ces allures-là est un homme mort à brève échéance. Ceux de mes clients qui eurent la meilleure main, comme vous dites autour du tapis, n'ont pas tenu plus d'un mois. Calculez les bénéfices que cela me procure.

— Savez-vous bien, lui dis-je, un peu froid, que ce que vous faites là c'est un réel assassinat? Vous poussez les gens par vanité à courir à la mort, et vous escomptez cette catastrophe jugée par vous inévitable.

Il haussa les épaules: — Pourquoi tant de fausse sensiblerie? Je vous répète que tout être qui, en dehors d'une course, pilote une 100-chevaux est un homme brûlé. Qu'au moins cela profite à quelqu'un.

Comme nous parlions, le croupier annonça: 400 louis en banque. Faites vos jeux... Il y eut un petit silence, et le banquier abattit: "Neuf!"

— Vous voyez, fis-je, qu'on gagne aussi à ce jeu-là.

Juste au même moment, le baron de Z... entra en coup de vent et dit tout haut:

— Dartel vient de se tuer en auto au tournant de Varaville.

Il y eut dans la salle un frisson de

stupeur. Mon interlocuteur tira son gilet sur son ventre rebondi et me glissa à l'oreille:

— Assuré hier pour 500,000. — Vous voyez qu'on gagne aussi au mien. — Serviteur, Monsieur.



THE POSEUR

By Ethel M. Kelley

I HAVE a stunning sort of pose
That's very dear to me,
And also much admired by those
Who have the eyes to see;
(It is not every man who knows
Exquisite artistry.)

For many months I sought the kind
Most suited to my style;
The modes in poses change, I find,
And every little while
One wears a different state of mind,
A different class of smile!

The "over-bored" is quite passé
And "young enthusiasm"
Is only done in book or play;
The esoteric spasm,
I fear, has really seen its day
(Now *everybody* has 'em!)

The breathless bard seemed new enough,
Swift signals from the muses
And verses scribbled on the cuff
'Mid absent, rapt excuses;
But if one can't sustain the bluff,
There's so much that he loses!

I thought to be a socialist,
Disheveled and dramatic;
(The ladies who are on one's list
Grow so absorbed, ecstatic!)
Yet hesitated to insist
On dwelling in an attic!

Despairing, with nor pose nor pelf
I saw the world ignore me,
And looming large the social shelf
With no one to adore me.
But now—I'm *posing as myself*,
And carry all before me!

THE HERO'S CROWN

By Constance Smedley

MARMY played the white-haired father in "The Whirlwind of Sin." Marmy's people were scarcely in the "legitimate"; Marmy referred to them as being in the "All Frisky" line, or, as less untrammelled spirits termed it, the "Al Fresco." They had pitches out of doors in the Summer, and gave modest entertainments in which the whole family appeared, so Marmy was rather looked down on by those who came of true "professional" stock. Still, he was wonderfully enthusiastic, and threw himself into his part with refreshing simplicity and heartiness. Indeed, if it had not been for the loose, untidy nature of his build, he might have been drawing his two pound ten a week as hero, instead of being doomed to white-haired fathers, where a shambling walk is permissible, and even popular; and if it seem hard that people should be blessed with heroes' hearts and cursed with bony hands, let me assure you that Marmy was perfectly contented, and had never had an ambition in the world, except perhaps on one occasion; and then, if Marmy had been handsome and a gentleman—but there! Romances aren't as simple in real life as they are upon the stage; and so Marmy's romance was hardly a romance at all. What little there was took place at Hayfields.

"The Whirlwind of Sin" had had the good luck to get a three nights' bill at the theatre there, because "The Sorrows of Satan" had proved a disappointment, and it was a choice of "The Whirlwind" or closing the house.

How a theatre had ever come to be at Hayfields no one knew, for it was the sleepest little town imaginable; all the tradespeople were in bed at ten, and the country people had no taste for the drama, though, as Marmy pathetically put it, "You'd have thought they'd have been glad to go to anything in such a quiet place!" Still, any theatre gives distinction to a fit-up tour which roams from hall to hall, and the company saved up their correspondence carefully, till they could use the theatre address, as a heading, carelessly.

"The Whirlwind of Sin" had not proved a very lucrative investment, and the advance agent had been left behind several towns before, so that the company had to find rooms as best they could; and they patrolled the deserted streets on Sunday evening for some time before they could find an anchorage. Now, Marmy never spent his money with undue recklessness; he had Scotch blood in his veins which he had to thank for other things than boniness, and at last he found a landlady who agreed to take him and the baggageman for sixpence each per night, sitting-room and bedroom inclusive.

They were standing at the door, haggling for terms—and Marmy says he's pretty sure he should have got her down to sixpence for the two—when Marmy's romance began.

Down the High street came a dashing pair of horses, and behind them sat a young woman, whom Marmy described as a sort of queen. It wasn't her beauty so much as her air of breeding that conquered Marmy. Her

face was very pale, but without a suspicion of powder, and her hair was a natural brown, and she was dressed very quietly, so that Marmy could recollect no detail of her attire; but the way in which she held her head made every other woman Marmy had ever spoken to seem low-born to him. This beautiful young creature looked Marmy straight in the eyes as her carriage passed, and Marmy believes she smiled at him, though I'm not sure but that Marmy is a little fanciful here; for though Marmy was fully satisfied with the frock-coat which he had picked up in one of the towns on tour for eighteen-pence, still his Panama hat and large bow tie detracted from the air of smartness that one could wish for in a gentleman on Sunday.

However, whatever passed between the young woman and Marmy caused him such agitation that he closed with the landlady on the spot, and by the end of the evening Marmy had made himself a byword in the town, through the way in which he wandered up and down the High street, watching out, though vainly, for her carriage. He displayed the same persistency through the following day, and the sight of his back as he stood on the stage with his eyes at a hole in the curtain made even the baggageman feel sorry for him.

What with the state of the business, which was shocking, and the continual suspense and disappointment, Marmy's temper became somewhat soured, and when, on the third and last day of his visit, he found the landlady had had the impudence to make up a bed for a perfect stranger in the sitting-room, that he and the baggageman were paying for, and actually met the stranger coming out as they went down to breakfast, words ran high.

Words ran so very high that it came to a question of going on the spot, and then the landlady tried to charge them a shilling extra for the use of gas and firing, which Marmy rightly considered an extortion. In fact, Marmy's passionate disposition

and hatred of injustice caused him to leave the house that moment in a most awful state of excitement, without paying a penny; the only thing which comforted him being that he had had the best of the argument, which, by the bye, I noticed Marmy generally had. But there was some conversation about police stations which was rather personal than pleasant, and as the landlady was an old and well-known resident, Marmy was distinctly doubtful as to his reception on the stage that night.

The baggageman went off to seek a lodging, and Marmy hung about the High street till the landlady's little boy returned from school, and, unfortunately, recognized him. It is never easy to discourage children, especially when clad in garments which are, to say the least, theatrical in cut; and when the child became emboldened by the advent of sundry little friends, Marmy soon found himself making for the quiet of the country lanes surrounding Hayfields, and it was only by dint of walking very fast and continually doubling, that he managed at last to shake off his pursuers.

The road on which he stood ran along the hillside; then it twisted, and came back into the valley underneath. He raised his eyes and looked dejectedly along the road twisting up among the bracken-fern and gorse bushes to the distant sky-line. Then, as he watched, mournful, despondent, the sharp sound of wheels came to him, and over the crest of the hill bowled a dog-cart, with the young woman he had seen in the High street seated in it. The horse was dashing along so quickly that Marmy had only time to grasp the bewildering fact that it was really she, before she had borne down on him and passed him. She was sitting up very proudly and holding the reins with perfect confidence, though Marmy observed at the time there was no groom behind; but she flew by so quickly that he was conscious only of a passionate desire to see her again, and in some way to attract her notice. The whole thing occurred so suddenly that before he

knew what he was doing he found himself racing down, across the meadow, to the lower road along which the cart would have to pass in the next few minutes. He had some idea of asking the way to the nearest station, and even of hinting at a sprained ankle; but he owns this plan was vague.

Anyway, he had tumbled down the hill, and was over the fence and standing by the roadside when the cart came tearing round the bend, and then, even Marmy, for all his amazing foolishness, saw that the horse was out of hand, and was running away. When the young woman saw Marmy standing there, she thought he had seen her danger from the first, and had dashed down the hill to save her; and according to Marmy, the most beautiful look of rapture came over her face, and if she didn't call out to him to help her, it was only because she had such complete confidence that he would do it.

Marmy has owned since that if he had had time to think, he never could have brought himself to touch that horse, for it was snorting and biting the air till it seemed more like a raging lion than a domestic animal; but the young woman sat so confident and calm, and looked at him in such a trustful way, that he could no more stop himself from throwing himself upon the horse's head than he could have stopped himself from shouting in the theatre the impassioned climax of his great speech about his daughter's shame! He says it felt for all the world as if the orchestra were playing and the whole house hanging on his accents, and the only touch of reality about the situation was a distinct feeling of annoyance that there were no people in sight to witness his heroic deed!

But such is the surprisingness of life, that Marmy caught on to the horse's head, and what is more surprising still—for horses were as much a mystery to Marmy as unborn babes—the horse was actually impressed by Marmy's bluff, and stopped. It was such a wonderful moment that, Marmy says, even before he released the panting steed—and you may be sure he got

away from the animal as soon as he possibly could—he found himself pinching himself to see if it was really real. Then, as he stepped back, the hedge-rows wavered, and the skies descended, and he felt the ground slip quietly from his feet, and he fell down on the grass right under the nose of the young woman. The heavenly providentialness of this amazes Marmy to this day; for if it had not happened, nothing could have saved him from having to drive the lady home, which, Marmy says, he does not see how he could have done, having had a mortal fear of driving ever since his best friend was run away with and the trap smashed to pieces, and the friend was rushed for a sovereign to pay for the damage, to Marmy's own knowledge, his friend having borrowed from him for the purpose.

When Marmy recovered consciousness, he found himself lying on the grass, with a sharp piece of flint in the middle of his back, and the lovely young woman bending over him.

"How can I thank you, most noble and brave of all the men I ever see?" said the young woman, according to Marmy.

"Don't mention it," said Marmy feebly, and trying to wriggle off the flint.

"You are killed," said the young woman. "Speak! Tell me you are not seriously injured!"

"Only a slight faintness," said Marmy, even in that agitating moment remembering to seem to be battling against fearful pangs.

However, the young woman, who was not versed in the ways of heroes, took his word for it, and from what I can make out, for Marmy slurs over this part as being tedious, mounted the cart and said, "May I ask the name of my brave preserver?"

"Marmaduke Paget," said Marmy, giving his stage name, as is the custom.

"Paget!" said the young woman. "Not one of the Tranby Pagets?"

"Cousins!" said Marmy, still dizzy, so he says, with the shock; "my father's cousins," said Marmy, going

on lying, now he'd started. "I've had reverses!"

"Poor, poor fellow!" said the young woman, and, to poor, foolish Marmy's rapture, asked if she might have the pleasure of driving him to her home to luncheon, as she would like her aunt to meet him and thank him.

And then Marmy's troubles began. The groom came running along the road at this moment, and touched his hat as he came up; and what with Marmy's fearing to touch his hat back, as being too familiar, and not liking to offend the man by taking no notice of him, his state of nervousness was pitiable. In the end he bowed coldly and smiled warmly as a compromise, which, of course, turned out to be wrong, as he saw by the young woman's look of surprise and the funny pink color that came over the face of the groom.

This disconcerted Marmy at the start and the young woman's kindness did not in the least improve the position, for she talked about millions of relations of whom Marmy had never heard, and asked why he hadn't made himself known to this uncle or to that aunt, to all of which Marmy could only keep on saying he had been too proud. Her tone became so pitying at last, that Marmy had to tell her things were not quite so bad with him as she imagined; and let her know that he had played parts at His Majesty's Theatre, not mentioning that the "parts" consisted of the hind legs of an elephant.

"And, after all, one has the satisfaction of mixing with ladies and gentlemen when one goes on the stage," said Marmy rather haughtily, for, as he says, the way she had been talking, he might have been a sandwich man. But to Marmy's never-solved wonder, this remark had the most extraordinary effect on her, and she never spoke another word all the way home, and though that was a short distance, Marmy says the silence was appalling.

But if he had known what was in store for him at the Hall, uncomforta-

ble as were his feelings in the dog-cart, he would have remained in it till the crack of doom! He says the sight of the place was enough to turn you sick as you drove up to it. Tall marble pillars, from what I can make out, for Marmy varies this, formed a colonnade in front, and a long flight of steps led up into a lofty hall which Marmy describes as being in the style of the hall at the British Museum, only colder. Marmy seems to recollect serried rows of equerries and footmen standing about the hall, and a stern old gentleman in black, who approached effusively, and whom Marmy took for the young woman's uncle.

"This gentleman has saved my life," said the young woman quickly, as the old gentleman drew back, rather stiffly; "I have brought him home to luncheon." And I have no doubt she knew by that time she had done a foolish thing.

"Yes, miss," said the butler. You can imagine Marmy's feelings when the person to whom he had offered his hand so affably turned out to be a servant.

"Housekeeper's room, miss?" said the butler, looking at Marmy rather doubtfully, as if wondering if he were quite up to the housekeeper's standard.

Then came the most awful moment of all. Marmy says the young woman distinctly hesitated. Marmy stood there, feeling more hot and uncomfortable—and yet at the same time raging—than he can describe; and, judging from what I know of Marmy, I should say he looked it, for he was never easy at the best of times. Perhaps the young woman saw his unhappiness; she looked at him for another moment, and then said very proudly to the butler, "This gentleman will dine with us!" and they went off to the dining-room, followed by the butler and a glassy stare.

The meal that followed was, in Marmy's own words, "a record breaker in the anguish line." They had every single delicacy of the season that was difficult to eat. There were

green peas so small and soft that it was absolutely impossible to place them on a fork in sufficient quantities to enjoy them. There was asparagus which, Marmy says, they ate with clippers. He battled with them for some time, trying to fix a piece between them, but whenever he had raised it half-way to his mouth the piece fell out; and after he had kept the aunt—a stately lady—and the young woman sitting toying with their bread, for over ten minutes, he gave it up and told the footman it always gave him indigestion, which, considering it was the first asparagus he had seen that season, he himself thought sounded feeble.

Of course they had every sort of meat and fish that had the most awkward bones in, but the extraordinarily puzzling nature of the morsels that were brought to him, he could only put down to malice on the part of a red-headed young footman with whom he had had a few words at the beginning.

It seems that Marmy had begun by serving himself when the dishes were first handed to him, till he suddenly found this was not the course the aunt and the young woman were pursuing. Then he followed their example and sat still when the next dish was offered him, and the malicious young footman pretended to think that this meant Marmy wanted nothing. When it came to green peas, Marmy told the footman what he thought of him, and passed a remark or two to the aunt and the young woman as to what servants were coming to. To which, he said, the aunt shammed deaf!

They ended with cherry tart, and that finished Marmy; he didn't attempt it.

Long and luxurious as was the meal, he never had a really hearty mouthful of anything, and it was fortunate that fright and nervousness had taken his appetite away. He daren't even take a sip of wine to cheer him up, he was so afraid of its getting into his head and making him act foolishly.

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Toward the end of luncheon, no one seems to have talked much. The young woman and her aunt sat looking at their plates, for which Marmy was thankful, as it gave him more time for mastering the awkward joints the footman put before him. They dropped the topic of his relations at a very early stage; though whether this was due to suspicion or natural dullness, Marmy could not say. Beautiful and highborn as the ladies undoubtedly were, Marmy was forced to own he had never met worse conversationalists. After luncheon they gave Marmy an excellent cigar, and asked him if he'd like a stroll around the grounds, but he said he must get off home, he was afraid; and so they ordered the dog-cart.

The nightmare feeling quickened into realistic agony in one more anguished moment before he left; they came on to the steps to see him off, and it flashed upon him that they were contemplating a reward of money. He threw as much dignity as he could into his voice and general manner, and just managed to keep them off; but the sting remained. The young woman made some very charming remarks about owing her life to him, and if she ever could do anything at any time, would he let her know?—to which Marmy begged her very politely not to mention it. He thought afterward of several clever speeches that he might have made.

Marmy says he drew his first natural breath when he had ascended to the front seat of the dog-cart, and was driving off beside the groom who had been thrown out in the morning. Marmy asked after his injuries and that gave a good opening for conversation, which then flowed on unbrokenly until they reached the town. The groom proved a most intelligent young man, and said the whole town should have been there to witness Marmy's heroism. To which Marmy answered, as was proper, that he had only done his duty as an English gentleman.

When they arrived at Hayfields, Marmy directed the groom to drive up

to the principal hotel, as he thought he could stand about in the porch in a careless manner till the dog-cart had driven off; but he had scarcely descended when the Boots came out to ask if he wanted anything, and though Marmy asked him haughtily not to give him any cheek, he had the humiliation of seeing the groom listening, open-mouthed. As Marmy strode off down the street he saw the groom was getting down, and he knew the Boots would enlighten him fully as to the extent of Marmy's patronage of the hotel.

I don't think there could have been a more dejected creature than Marmy when he came into the theatre that night. He sat on the edge of his basket in the wings, and listened to the overture in a dreamy stupor. The memory of that awful luncheon, and the uncertainty as to how many of the landlady's friends would turn up that evening, had caused his spirits to ebb to zero. I do not think all actors would have had the pluck to deliberately face a guying, but Marmy was an honest, conscientious person, and it would never have entered his head to leave the manager in a hole; besides which he sent half his money home to his people every week, and a night's stoppage was a serious affair. Yet it needs pluck to face an unfriendly audience, and I am not sure but that Marmy was something of a hero, after all.

It was an extraordinary evening. I have seen plays fall flat, but I have never seen one fall so flat as that first act did. Marmy did not appear until the second act; and the hero's lofty sentiments passed absolutely unnoticed. The villain wasn't hooted, or even jeered at; the funny man was utterly ignored. The company had played to silence, and very painful that is; but they had never played to such ghastly silence as they did that night.

After the first act, the hero-manager turned round on the stage to ask what in thunder was the matter.

"It's a riot," said Marmy, sitting on his basket, very white and sickly. "I think they're going to lynch me."

"You!" said the manager, staring at him loftily.

"It's a stout, red-faced woman as is the leader," said Marmy. "She came in with a small boy and a large party on orders."

"There's not an order in the house," said the manager. "We've turned money away!"

This left the company in such a gasping condition that even Marmy could not answer for a moment, and as the orchestra piano was tinkling out the last melancholy bars, Marmy had to take up his cane and handkerchief and make ready to appear. He was disclosed sitting in the garden of his parsonage, and directly the curtain drew up there rose such a shout from the audience that it made poor Marmy think he must be dreaming. He sat blinking his eyes at them for a moment, scarcely understanding what it meant. Then he caught sight of the groom sitting in the front row of the circle hurrahing like one mad; and there came over Marmy's face a look of rapture and surprise that was one of the most pitiful things I have ever seen. And he then broke down altogether, and stood there like a great, awkward baby, with the tears rolling down his cheeks, and bowing with as much dignity as possible. That made the audience even more enthusiastic, and they cheered and waved and shouted like people possessed; for the groom had told the story at the hotel, and spread it through the town, just as he had heard it from Marmy's own lips; and as the young woman was the lady of the manor and absolutely idolized, the townspeople could not make enough of Marmy's heroism.

I have never seen Marmy act as he did that night. Every word he uttered was cheered to the echo, and he had an encore of the anguished speech about his daughter's shame; while the scene at the fall of the curtain was enough to make the company delirious with envy. The audience was not content with hooting back everyone who came in front, and calling vociferously for Marmy, but when at last

Marmy did appear—and the delay was through no fault of his own but entirely that of the hero-manager—the mayor stood up and made a speech on Marmy's daring, and handed him a purse containing eight pounds ten, as a token of the townspeople's gratitude.

I don't think Marmy quite enjoyed the purse, though the mayor alluded to it very tactfully, as part of the "hero's crown." He said he was simply longing to throw it back into the audience for the poor of the town;

but he had to think of his mother and people, the All Frisky business being none too lively at the best of times, and so he took the purse, but very awkwardly he did it.

"The Whirlwind of Sin" departed from Hayfields on the morrow, and he never heard of the young woman again, except that she prevented the full account of the accident from appearing in the Hayfields paper, which the mayor had promised should be done. Still, Marmy had had his hero's crown.



THE FREAK

By Edwin L. Sabin

LAST eve while strolling through the park,
 Digesting, thinking, gazing,
 Upon a bench did I remark
 A spectacle amazing.
 Secluded 'neath a lilac there,
 Which screened it from beholders,
 It bore twain heads, I do declare,
 Upon one pair of shoulders!
 A kind of twin, it looked to be,
 On near examination,
 So neatly joined that I could see
 No point of separation.
 And as I stood prepared to run
 If it should wax unruly,
 Two hearts I marked that beat as *one*—
 Another marvel, truly!
 Although of eyes it had two pair
 It seemed to be poor-sighted,
 And acted as if unaware
 Of presence not invited.
 And so I ventured closer yet,
 To note the vocals of it.
 All one head said was, "P'ecious pet!"
 The other, "Does oo yove it?"
 "Well, well!" I mused, "a human freak!
 Moreover, imbecilic,
 Escaped from some musée to seek
 This covert most idyllic."
 And saying naught to cop, anon
 (I would not have it pestered),
 I left it there, the bench upon,
 Amidst the dusk sequestered.

THE STATUE AND THE NICHE

By Frances Aymar Mathews

A SCULPTOR found what he thought was the most beautiful piece of marble in the world. He said:

"I will make of it a Statue of Love, and it shall be the acme of my powers of expression, the molding of my ideal, the realization of dreams, my needs and wants."

He worked for days and nights, weeks and months; and as the shaft evolved from the stone, as the torso developed from the shaft, as the thing grew into vivid form and beauty, the Sculptor said:

"I can give this thing Life, which, after all, is Love."

So instead of making his Statue blind, as all loves are, he gave it exquisite laughing eyes. Then he breathed upon it and into the wonderful sweet curve of the cool lips, and suddenly the Statue became alive, and the Sculptor rejoiced with a great and unparalleled rejoicing. So happy was he that he forgot all other things, which is the estate of mortal man when he loves in this fashion, and for a long time he spent himself in gazing at that which he had won and wrested from the marble.

Then by-and-bye it came about, that the fancy crept into his mind that he could improve his Statue; modify it to meet the fluctuations and mutations of his own character and surroundings; alter it so that it should fit most neatly and exactly into the niche which stood vacant in his house.

He fetched the Statue to the house and placed it in the niche; he knelt down and adored it, he bowed and

worshiped, but the laughing eyes, and alluring lips and tender limbs of the Statue did not quite fit in the niche, and the Sculptor saw how it was, and smilingly said to himself:

"I will remedy all that."

And he took his chisel and the rest of his tools, keen, sharp, poignant things, and he used them with an exceeding wit and cleverness, for he was a resourceful, determined and strenuous man, fond of his own way in all things, and perilously sure that he had made the Statue, and therefore that he could not be dispossessed of his own. So he chipped off a bit here and a bit there at his will, and all the time that he was delighting in his mutilation, the Love Statue laughed on with its eyes and its lips when he was present, but when he went away, the bruised Statue felt aching within it that strange thing called a human heart, which the Sculptor had breathed into it; and it felt the pulsations and passion of that love which he had created in its heart. And the love of the Statue swerved, diminished, subsided with every blow of the Sculptor's improving chisel, so that compared with the illimitable and almighty beginning of its love-dawn, this was as one grain only of the countless sands of the sea.

But the Sculptor did not know.

He knew many things: he was a wise and learned and accomplished person with a marvelous appreciation of himself, but he had not then learned that there are blows which can destroy even love itself; that it may even wane and waver when it is subjected to tools and carved to meet requirements and conditions, which, when those of the man

who loves himself overmuch, are dull, thoughtless, common and selfish.

So day by day, as the Sculptor knocked off the little obnoxious pieces, and essayed to round and smooth and fit, and compel his Statue into the niche in his house, the laughing eyes grew somber, and the smiling, parted mouth, with its treasure of kisses, grew cold; tears came in place of laughter, and merely bloodless answers to the call of his anxious lips.

By-and-bye, however, when he had polished and hammered and hewn until it actually did seem to him that the Statue fitted exactly into the niche in his house, even while he surveyed the result of his artful and masterful training and moulding with triumphant delight, the Statue ceased to pulsate, the eyes forsook their sockets, the kisses froze on the lips.

He staggered, then he rushed to it and held it fervently in his arms; but even locked in his embrace, the Statue which he had created, endowed with life, and succeeded in filing into complete neatness for his niche,

resolved itself back into the shaft, and the shaft into the stone, immutable, voiceless, uncomplaining, but yet striking at his heart and hearth.

Outside his door lay strewn the chips and cuttings of the Statue; other men came and gathered these up and bore them away, each man saying to himself:

"It is better to have even these fragments from the table of Love than that we should go forever hungry with our empty arms."

And one man, stronger than all the rest, ruthless and built as conquerors are, came into the Sculptor's garden and bore away even the stone itself, and he said to his own soul:

"I will breathe upon this stone; I will live and work, and delve and plan, and crucify myself, and maybe—God knows!—I can call back again into it the laughing eyes and the alluring lips, and the faithful heart of that Statue which this Sculptor created, made alive, and then was so stupid—or so wise—as to hammer back into inexistence."



THE OCEAN OF LOVE

By Florence Brooks

ALL day I felt the surge of some far sea
Murmuring through my being, and the sound
Throbbled with deep music while my sense was bound
Into a pulsing dream that grew to be
A song of oceanic mystery,
With depths to shake and currents to astound
My soul, till suddenly, O Love, I found
Thy flood immeasurable surrounded me.

O sea unplumbed and powerful, bitter brine
Art thou to a weak adventurer in thy deep!
Yet doth the right of wild dreams make all mine
That ocean where my soul doth swing and sleep.
Mine are thy full soft tides, thy impetuous forms,
Thy cradling rest, and O Love, thy blind storms.

THE FRENCH TALENT FOR LIVING

By Alvan F. Sanborn

"YOU know, Kitty," says the masterful Miss Panney of Stockton's "Girl at Cobhurst" in urging upon the doctor's wife a French cook, "that the Garden of Eden was truly paradise until they began to eat the wrong things."

Brillat-Savarin, ycleped "high-priest of gastronomy," wrote three-quarters of a century ago: "Digestion is, of all the bodily processes, the one which influences most the moral condition of the individual." Similarly, an Italian physician was wont to give this advice to his patients: "Remember, whatever comes into your life, that man is first of all an animal and cannot afford to despise the animal functions." If these bits of wisdom, so different in source but alike in import, are allowed only one-half of the authority to which they are entitled; they will make plain at once, without the aid of other preface or apology, why a study of the French mode of living may properly take as its point of departure a consideration of the French cuisine.

At a time when standards are flouted in the domains of government, literature, art, morality and religion, one may not expect to impose them anywhere, least of all where individual taste is so large a factor as it is in gastronomy. "*Sobre los gustos no hai disputa*," says well the Spanish proverb, and it were indeed as idle to try to convince the "down-Easter," for example, that a daily round of pork, pies, doughnuts, flapjacks, hot biscuit and hot drinks is not at once the most delicious and salubrious of dietary regimens, as it would be to try to convince the average over-perfumed woman and

smoke-saturated man that musk and tobacco are not, respectively, the least offensive of odors. Nevertheless, the French *chef de cuisine*—a mighty serious fellow—knowing better than anybody that cooking is not an affair that admits of slouching or capricious procedure, insists on reverencing it accordingly.

The French *chef de cuisine* goes farther. He insists on believing sturdily in standards, absolute standards, and, dogmatic, intolerant and Chauvinistic as he is serious, recognizes no standards but those of the French school by which he has been reared. In this faith in and devotion to culinary standards, and French culinary standards at that, the epicure of the world at large, without distinction of nationality, is so far of one mind with the French chef that the latter has been summoned alike to the kitchens of old-world monarchs and nobles and new-world millionaires. Wherever, in fact, people give much enlightened attention to what they allow to enter their stomachs, either he or his recipes have penetrated. Obviously, it would be going too far to assert, as the French chef does, and as some of his paymasters and admirers have been known to do—probably under the immediate argument of one of his dinners—that the French alone know how to cook. Cape Cod cranberry sauce, Boston baked beans, Fulton Market stews, British plum pudding and hot pot, Neapolitan spaghetti, German sauerkraut and Frankfurters, and Mexican tamales, touched in their honest plebeian pride, would rise up, all together, in righteous indignation and give the

lie direct to such an assertion. But, without dogmatism, without the slightest prejudice to the excellence of these and a hundred other more patrician local and national dishes, may it not be fairly said that the French chef's cooking, viewed as a system, whatever the merit of special dishes in other systems may be, must have something exceptionally admirable about it, to have been thus enthusiastically approved by the consensus of the expert opinion of the civilized world?

Now, the system of the French chef, the system of epicures everywhere, is, broadly speaking, the system of France, which amounts to saying that the French nation is a nation of epicures. Therein lies the interesting and significant phenomenon as well as the sole reason for referring to the chef or the epicures at all in this place. The multitude eat regularly in France as only the few are privileged to eat in other countries; the masses of the people enjoy, and have enjoyed for generations, a diet available elsewhere only to the gastronomic élite and to such of the wealthy as, being quite too new at the business of proper living to be themselves of the élite, have had the foresight to put themselves under the tutelage of those who are.

The formula of the meal, according to the French chef, according to French and international epicurean tradition; of the meal that changeth not, which is the same, humanely speaking, "yesterday, today, and forever," which appeals to every side of the many-sided appetite that distinguishes man from the brute; of the meal that would seem to meet every requirement of appetizing, refreshing, nourishing and stimulating; of the ideal meal, in a word, is, stated in the simplest possible terms:—*hors d'œuvre*, soup, fish, entrée, roast, salad, cheese, fruit, black coffee, bread and wine from first to last, and a liqueur with, or after, the coffee.

By this formula, the evening meal, which is the dinner of all classes in France, is prepared. To it, the rich or luxurious make some happy additions, and from it, the poor, perforce,

make some subtractions. Thus, a slight dessert of pastry is sometimes inserted before the cheese, while fish rarely appears as a fish course except on the tables of the very well-to-do. Those who can afford it serve an extra vegetable course between the entrée and the roast. With those who cannot the vegetable is the entrée; but whether entrée or extra course, always it is accorded a fine reverence. Never is it degraded to the rank of a side dish, the semicircle of tiny platters characteristic of our middle-class and boarding-house tables being utterly at variance with the French feeling that becoming service is of equal importance with proper order and good cooking. The *hors d'œuvre*, the black coffee and the liqueur are omitted by the poor—reluctantly enough—and the "roast" course is quite as likely, with them, to be a grilled, fried, or even boiled meat as a baked one; but the soup, the entrée—as a made meat dish or a vegetable—the roast—as a meat in some form—the salad, the cheese, the fruit—of which last three, thanks to the high specialization in production, the choice is limitless—and the wine are well-nigh fixed quantities. The deviations from the ideal meal are slight, after all, when an average is struck; they are only such as the condition of the family treasury compels and are rarely of a sort to destroy entirely the meal's symmetry.

There is a pretty French proverb, "A dinner without cheese at the end is like a beautiful woman with one eye," which well expresses the esteem in which the cheese course is popularly held. As to wine, it is the average Frenchman's unassailable conviction—and here most gastronomical authorities are with him—that a passable dinner with wine is better than a better dinner without it. Nothing but absolute inability to purchase his favorite beverage can induce him to forego it.

The *déjeuner*, literally translated, breakfast, but corresponding more nearly to our lunch, is a hearty meal built on the same model as the dinner, and is almost dignified enough to be

called a dinner. It insists less strenuously on the soup and more strenuously on the *hors d'œuvre*—the latter during the radish season is rarely absent from the humblest table—is more inclined to dispense with the entrée, the café and the liqueur, and evinces a decided preference for chops and beefsteaks, under the head of roast.

The first meal of the day, corresponding, not too closely, to our breakfast, is so very slight an affair that in current parlance it has not even a name, though it is referred to as the *petit déjeuner* or *premier déjeuner* when it becomes necessary to distinguish it from the *déjeuner* proper. It consists of hot chocolate, *café au lait*, or, among the lower classes, soup and bread, and is taken immediately after waking. This simple breakfast, pick-me-up, or whatever one may choose to call it, is, in effect, little more than a gentle, respectful, but firm notice served on the stomach of the serious work expected of it later on. It sets the digestive machinery in motion without overtaxing it, calls blood away from the brain without giving it all to the stomach, braces the muscles, fortifies the nerves, warms, stimulates, encourages, emboldens. It is a ritual as sweet, satisfying and indispensable to him who habitually practises it, as is his morning prayer to the devotee, in that, like the morning prayer, it starts the day aright. It relieves the leisure and homeworking classes of the burden of dressing fully before midday, gives the laborer and housewife the fullest time for sleep, not to mention the early morning wear and tear it saves the latter, and gets large households under way with the least fretting and friction possible. Abstractly considered, nothing more admirable hygienically, more conducive to comfort or more comely than this unobtrusive method of breaking fast could be devised; and nothing could work better practically in France. At first blush, it would seem to command the same international allegiance as the dinner and the *déjeuner*; but, owing to the social, commercial, industrial and climatic

conditions which appear to necessitate in many countries a hearty breakfast, it has not been sanctioned to anything like the same extent by epicures outside of France.

The relations of the various parts of a meal to its whole, of each meal to the other meals and to the business of the day are almost perfectly adjusted thus by that highest of arts which conceals art. There is a smoothness, a gracefulness, a naturalness, a definiteness precluding unpleasant surprises, about the table routine that attains nigh to inevitableness and does attain to charm. The household days pass, as the streams pass, without "taking thought" because they must.

Whenever it is convenient, and sometimes when it is not, the two principal meals are served in the open air. The balconies, courts, doorways and side-walks of apartment and tenement houses are devoted to this purpose by the families that are nearest, or that, otherwise, have the best titles to them; and the gardens of hotels and private residences and the terraces of restaurants and cafés are utilized to the same end. This custom of *al fresco* dining is a large additional source of charm.

It is a popular fallacy that the French cuisine includes little or no meat. The superficial observer is naturally beguiled into this opinion by the superb shop and market displays of vegetables and bread-stuffs. Nor does he sufficiently regard the fact that all Frenchmen, even French laborers, eat practically two dinners a day. It is another popular fallacy that the greater part of what meat there is, is found in "made dishes." This notion arises partly, no doubt, from the rare excellence and infinite variety of French made dishes, partly from the comparative absence of roast beef, and partly from the dubious character of the *tables-d'hôte*—labeled French—which have appeared in numbers, of late years, in large American cities and whose fare bears about as close a resemblance to real French fare as eel does to brook trout. The truth is that steaks and chops are in high favor and that the *gigot* (roast

mutton) holds much the same place in France that roast beef holds in America.

The French table code makes leisureliness of equal importance with good food and a fitting order and manner of service. The Frenchman insists on taking ample time for his meals—even for his lunch. The stand-up lunch counter—dreadful product of American hurry—is unknown in France, and the American clerk and business man's feat of bolting a pie-and-coffee lunch in five minutes thereat would inspire the Frenchman with the same sort of morbid wonder as do fire-eating and sword-swallowing. Penury may condemn him to a meager four or five sous' worth of bread and cheese and wine, but he takes it in decency and order. He makes a ritual even of that. Hurried eating is an offense which only direct emergency can condone.

I recall a capital illustration. A middle-class family with which I was visiting received, one night, just before the dinner began, a highly interesting bit of domestic news, which so far preoccupied them that they quite unconsciously accelerated their movements. The unfeigned consternation of all, when, at the end of the meal, one of their number suddenly discovered that they had been scarcely half an hour at table and that the bread which ordinarily, as in most French households, was consumed in enormous quantities, had scarcely been touched, was truly comical. They were both shocked and alarmed and confidently expected, I verily believe, to be forced to send for the doctor before morning.

But it is only incidentally on hygienic grounds that the Frenchman objects to precipitation at table. He objects primarily because he likes to have each and every dish count for all that it is worth in point of savor, and he understands perfectly well that the most proper repast, improperly partaken of, counts for little more than an indifferent one. Furthermore, he refuses to be hurried because he wants to talk.

Had one a notion to be facetious, he might define the Frenchman as a talk-

ing animal and the French social fabric as a highly elaborate contrivance to facilitate talk. No one but a foreigner thinks of protesting against the indefinite occupation of the narrow sidewalk of a busy thoroughfare by two or more people for purposes of conversation or of being offended at the halting of his bus, tram-car or cab for the same commendable object. In the one instance as in the other, the native is philosophically tolerant from an inner assurance that his own turn to block traffic with his tongue is bound sooner or later to arrive. A French visitor to the United States who was asked in the Grand Central Depot (New York) the most pronounced difference between the people he saw about him and a similar crowd in a Paris railway station, replied without a second's hesitation, "their extraordinary silence." Another French visitor said that the crowds of preoccupied shoppers he met on Fourteenth street seemed like "dead people walking." Still another—it's an old story but worth repeating in this connection—was so annoyed by the one and two-minute entr'actes of a hustling Broadway theatre as to protest with much vehemence that such an outrage would never be tolerated in Paris, the key to his amusing anger being the immemorial French custom of turning the entr'acte into an occasion for friendly meetings and social gossip. Bicyclists are as intent on rollicking chatter in the Paris Bois as they are on speed in the parks of America, in which latter country the wheeling enthusiasm seemed at one time in a fair way to reduce the spoken language to a very small number of asthmatic monosyllables.

M. Fontan-Crusoe, one of Jules Vallès's "Réfractaires," is a true, if extreme embodiment of the French passion for talk. "They came thither" (to a little *crêmerie* where black coffee was to be had for two sous a glass), "these comrades of mine, of whom I had made the acquaintance at the Sorbonne, under the Odéon beside fountains and about the Luxembourg

Basin, and they talked. They talked of everything which interests our poor humanity; of extinct races, future laws, the transmigration of souls, immortality, etc. Days of six and seven sous these! Sometimes it was my lot to go without my dinner, in order to establish myself in the *créméric*, at night, with the money it would have cost. Let those who know not what the cult of intelligence is and are content to live like brutes throw the first stone."

Talk is prominent everywhere, and everywhere its own admirable excuse. Nowhere, however, is it quite so rampant and nowhere quite so precious as at the table, particularly the dinner-table. As he thinks of the wine so the typical Frenchman thinks of talk; a passable dinner with plenty of clever talk is better than a good dinner without it. The oft-quoted stage whisper of the servant of Mme. de Maintenon, "Madame, there is no roast today, give them another story," was thus as much a permanent tribute to conversation as an accessory of a meal as it was an immediate compliment to the special conversational powers of his talented mistress. Smoking, the greatest of all artificial aids to soulful talk, is generally encouraged at table. The doggerel charge of the poet Cowper against tobacco,

"Its worst fault is banishing for hours
The sex whose presence civilizes ours,"

true enough of the country for which it was written, does not hold good of France, where the "civilizing sex"—though it smokes less itself, perhaps, than in most other European countries—prefers the fumes of the weed to sequestration from the good things that go with them. At the night dinner, the event to which all other events of the French day seem to lead up, financiers, manufacturers, merchants, small shop-keepers, clerks, mechanics, laborers and persons of leisure are alike prone to linger long in lively converse. The family of my Paris concierge, who sit down to the table between seven and seven-thirty, rarely leave it before nine, though their meal is nat-

urally not an elaborate one. During the Summer, when they eat in the court, if the weather is fine, they take their coffee under the stars, and often invite in one or two neighbors to share it with them.

After all, excellent as are the dishes and the order and manner of their service, the table-talk is, perhaps, the chief glory of the French meal. "Animals feed, men eat, the man of *esprit* alone knows how to eat," and while all Frenchmen are, of course, not men of *esprit* in reality at the table, at least, they all aspire to be and may pass for being with their equals, which comes to very much the same as if they were.

It is no unusual thing to hear our countrymen and countrywomen, especially our countrywomen, refer to eating as a necessary evil, like the prescribed dose of noisome medicine; as an altogether bothersome business to be disposed of as quickly as possible, with an air that is sour, aggressive, disgusted, languid, patronizing, dreamful, whining or discouraged, according as it springs from dyspepsia, Puritanism, interrupted hustling, anemia, affectation, esoteric philosophy, disappointment in love, or honest weariness with a hard and monotonous daily round. Such a sentiment would scarcely be uttered in France, where the attitude toward the table is universally cordial and respectful, and it could not be taken seriously if it were. The French writer who said, "The table is the sole place where one is never bored during the first hour," voiced perfectly a national feeling, and that in spite of the fact that the French horror of being bored amounts almost to a disease. The summons to dinner is as gladsome and irresistible as the call to the dance. Eating has only pleasant associations for the Frenchman; for him, food is literally good cheer. He cannot conceive of a meal without pleasure.

The converse is measurably, if not equally, true; he cannot conceive of pleasure without a meal or at least some form of refreshment. The moral beauty of that sort of estheticism which

consists in dragging around a body that has nothing but a great yearning within to sustain it, has never been revealed to him. He insists strongly, and succeeds in making his insistence felt, on having his stomach provided for everywhere he goes for amusement, and nearly everywhere he goes for any purpose whatsoever. Accordingly, parks, promenades, pleasure grounds, baths, libraries and museums are supplied with refectories; theatres and café-concerts with a refreshment service, and the annual art *salons* with conveniences for eating, smoking and drinking. Even political ratification meetings and labor assemblies are often conducted on the plan of the café-concert. If he is going where the chances of being satisfactorily cared for in this respect, at a reasonable price, are uncertain, he provides himself in advance with at least bread and cheese or sausage and wine, sometimes with the wherewithal for the preparation of a considerable meal; from which it happens that the lunch panniers of third-class railway travelers often take up more room than their baggage.

It is this habit of combining refreshment and pleasure, superadded to the social instinct so persistently and justly emphasized by M. Brunetière, which explains the café, the most characteristic of French social institutions—always excepting the family—and one of the best illustrations of the national talent for living. The fullness with which the diversions, privileges and atmosphere of the café have been a hundred times described obviates the need of dealing with them here. The verdict of the late Theodore Child that the Frenchman does not go to the café because he wants to drink, still less because he is thirsty, but drinks because he wants to go to the café, though intended as more or less of a pleasantry, of course, has so many confirmations that it might almost be taken literally. The honest *bourgeois* I once observed in a café talking for just three-quarters of an hour by the clock, after his order for a drink was executed, before it occurred to him to raise the liquid to

his lips, is a case in point. Obviously, he was not in a café because he was thirsty. Still, there can be no question as to the Frenchman's liking to drink—the amount of wine he imbibes at table alone is ample evidence of that—nor about his being often thirsty. Surely he goes to the café to drink, but just as surely he would not go if he could not do his drinking there in decency, comfort, leisureliness and in the midst of engaging discourse. He ordinarily confines himself to one or, at most, two orders* at a sitting as well in the evening as at the hour of the *apéritif*. He drinks slowly, as he eats slowly, and for similar reasons. Being naturally voluble, he does not need to get drunk to untie his tongue, and his abstemiousness does not result, therefore, in the same solemn and oppressive silences it would if he were a more reticent type. He can no more understand the American bar than he can the American lunch counter. True, so-called "American bars" abound in the show quarters of Paris, and the little zinc counter of the *marchand de vin* bears the name of "bar." The Frenchman dotes on the use of the word because it displays to advantage his familiarity with a foreign language; but the real thing remains and, it is to be hoped, will remain, a profound mystery to him. The twin abominations of the otherwise noble American conviviality, perpendicular drinking and wholesale treating—which would excuse, if anything could, the acridity of the prohibition and total-abstinence agitations—do not, relatively speaking, exist in France. The Frenchman is unable to comprehend why he should drink because another man with a greater natural craving than himself happens to be thirsty; nor why he should absorb six rounds, when he wants only one or two,

*This is true even of the much talked about absinthe, which, as a drink, is always largely diluted with water. The chief evil of absinthe drinking is an insidious undermining of the system rather than intoxication. No one in his senses will presume to deny the present and past existence of drunkenness in France; still, its amount, in proportion to the number who drink—the entire population—is amazingly slight.

because there are six men in his party; an inability which argues, it must be confessed, a certain thinness on the altruistic side of his character, but which has its sentimental, as well as its substantial, advantages, nevertheless.



FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAME LEANDRE

By Helen Woljeska

WHEN we mourn the death of a friend, we mourn the death of part of ourselves. That aspect of us which he had conceived is no more.

Do not expect any love to last. And let go away everybody and everything that wishes to leave you. As soon as you struggle to retain, you become small, and foolish, and commonplace.

Everything that is most beautiful in life and art owes its existence to impulse—not to intention.

The more I like people the less I wish to meet their kith and kin.

Debts are bad every way. If you take them lightly, they coarsen you. If you take them seriously, they worry you.

I do not love you. I love in you a certain quality or combination of qualities that has power to attract me. Every woman is at the mercy of a certain type of man.

To care for people on account of their attractive appearance only is like frequenting a house where you like the façade rather than the hostess.



SORROW AND SONG

By Edward Wilbur Mason

SORROW gives song. When Autumn's wild wind veers,
 The roses, dying when the day is done,
 Shout back with flame the swan-song of the sun,
 And leaves sweep earthward singing like the spheres.
 When Winter with the snow and silence nears,
 Then all the somber hill-tops and the vales
 Aroused to song, like stricken nightingales
 Pour forth with living gold their flaming fears.

And when the soul is seared with some great grief,
 How all its common hope and sad desire,
 For one impassioned moment wild and brief,
 Catches from all earth's pain a noble fire,
 And sings with silence of the heart and mind,
 Even as Sappho sang, or Milton blind!

THE ARBITRATION COMMITTEE

By Anne Warner

THERE was a man sitting at a desk, writing.

It was Saturday and the clerks were gone and the man himself was expecting to go soon.

He had only one letter to finish. He was writing fast, writing thus, four pages having already been done:

What you wrote me of the baby delighted me. It brought a choke to my throat. I draw my breath in hard and try to realize it. It seems as if we cannot live this way long. It is so—

He stopped and looked up. A shadow had fallen across his paper. Someone had come quietly in.

The man looking up was perhaps thirty-five, perhaps thirty-eight, years old. The someone, to whom he raised his eyes, was a woman ten years younger—a pretty woman, well-poised, well-dressed and rather chilling in expression.

"Mr. Cavell, I believe?" she said interrogatively.

The man took her in with one widely comprehensive glance.

"My name is Elliston," he said. "Hugh Cavell is my partner."

The woman gave him back his searching survey.

"I am Madge Wesley," she said.

"Ah!" he exclaimed quickly, almost sharply.

"I am *her* confidante," she went on, "you are his. We both understand the whole situation, I think." She turned, and, stepping for an instant through the open door into the other room, took up a package which she seemed to have laid down there. "These are the letters," she said, and placed them on his desk. Then she

sat down in a chair that was close at hand, looked down at her muff, and was silent.

Elliston was silent, too—for a little. Then he spoke.

"Hugh's letters—or, rather, Mrs. Dietrich's letters—are all here in the safe. Does she want them?"

The woman nodded.

Then Elliston rose, went to the safe, which was unlocked, and took out a sealed box.

"He sealed them up yesterday," he said, coming toward her. "He had them ready for me to give you." He laid the box down beside the package.

"Did he expect me?" she asked surprisedly.

"No, but he rather expected someone."

"Where is he?"

"He has gone South."

"Will he be gone long?"

"I hope so."

"Why? Wasn't he well?"

"Not so very."

She hitched her chair to where she could rest her elbow on the desk.

"Mr. Elliston," she said earnestly, "Elsie and I are the dearest and most intimate of friends. I wouldn't say it to Mr. Cavell himself, but there's no harm in my telling you that I know every bit of the story and have read most of those letters."

Elliston turned a little on his revolving chair.

"Well, my dear madame," he said, "I shouldn't care to have Mrs. Dietrich know it, but I have also read most of those letters. Hugh was utterly unable to bear the burden of such an affair alone by himself. He had to let some-

one know of his happiness, and then after the trouble began he had to have aid to—to—to survive the crash."

"Oh, isn't that pretty strong language?"

"Not in this case. It's strictest truth."

"You think he really cared?"

"Cared!"

Her eyes were fixed on his face.

"Mr. Elliston, you *really* think he loved her?"

"Of course he loved her—the only love of his life!"

She clasped her two hands hard together, leaned her chin on them, and stared ahead.

"And to think that they never even met!" she said slowly.

"Well, that was her fault," said the man. "Cavell was wild enough to meet her—you know *that*."

"Yes—I know all about it."

"He wrote and wrote and wrote, begging her to let him come and see her."

"I know. She showed me the letters."

"But she wouldn't let him come."

"No, she didn't want to meet him."

He lifted a sudden keenness toward her.

"What sort of a woman is she, anyway?" he asked. "Is she such an anomaly as her letters?"

"It's hard for me to say. You see, I know her so well—we were girls together."

"Is she lovable?"

"I love her."

"Pretty?"

"She was called pretty when she was a girl."

"Was her marriage a mistake?"

"Well, rather a mistake."

"How long since he died?"

"Two years."

"And he left her money?"

"Oh, yes, a big fortune."

"That caused the mischief, I fancy."

"Yes, she can't bear to be sought for her money."

"Did she think Cavell was after it, too?"

"I suppose she didn't know."

Elliston came out of his chair with a bound.

"Rot!" he exclaimed. "Why, he's got a half million of his own!"

She looked up with startled eyes. "Really?" she asked incredulously.

"Of course. But he's a bit sensitive over money himself. You see, he's been chased, too."

She smiled a little faintly.

He came back and sat down.

"Tell me," he said; "how did it begin? Do you know?"

She looked about in a somewhat embarrassed way.

"Yes, I know," she said, "but—do you think I ought to tell you?"

"Well, perhaps not. Cavell told me that he saw her portrait at the Lotos Club and wrote her a note, and that it began from that."

"Yes, that's how it began."

"But did you ever hear anything like the way it went on?"

"No, I never did."

"Wouldn't any sane person have thought them both mad?"

"Yes, I think so."

"That year they imagined themselves going around the world?"

"Yes, and when they were furnishing the house."

"It was so sweet about the Summer in Brittany, too."

Elliston paused and his voice fell many notes.

"And then the baby," he said almost reverently. "I'm married, and I suppose that you are?" the question came with a sudden shock.

"Oh, yes, I'm married," said Mrs. Wesley. Her eyes filled as she admitted the fact.

"Well, really, you know," said Elliston hurriedly, "I don't believe that I care a bit more for my baby than Hugh Cavell cared for that imaginary one of his. He never read me those letters, but he was wild with happiness over the notion of his solitary existence blooming like that in its desert."

Mrs. Wesley's lips trembled.

"Elsie was very happy, too," she said finally.

"And yet," said Elliston, his mouth

hardening suddenly, "it was she who deliberately chose to wreck it all."

"Don't say that!" cried the woman. "He wasn't content with their imaginary life. He began to ask too much."

"He asked her to meet him—that was all."

"That was too much. When they began to write it was with the distinct understanding that they would never meet."

"But why shouldn't they have met?"

"She didn't want to—after the letters."

"What was wrong in the letters? They were beautiful letters—full of grand ideals."

"But they would have made a meeting so embarrassing."

"I don't see why. They had only threshed out every matrimonial difficulty on paper until each knew the other's quota of wheat and chaff."

Mrs. Wesley shook her head seriously.

"Oh, she just couldn't stand thinking of meeting him after those letters," she said.

"She was a coward," said Elliston sharply. "She didn't deserve his love."

"She didn't ask him to love her," the friend retorted.

"She *made* him love her, anyhow."

"No, she didn't. He wrote her that it made him perfectly happy just to be allowed to love her."

"He presupposed some heart in her, anyhow."

"Well, she has a heart!"

"Oh, no, she hasn't."

Mrs. Wesley was beginning to look angry.

"She's my friend," she declared with dignity.

"And she's killed mine!" said Elliston.

"Don't say that."

"Yes, I shall. It's true."

"Mr. Cavell isn't going to die."

"You can't tell. He's perfectly beside himself."

"Oh, Mr.—Mr.——"

"Elliston."

"Mr. Elliston!"

"I don't believe any man was ever so mad over any woman before."

"Oh, Mr. Elliston!"

"That's a fact."

"But he's never even seen her!"

"That doesn't make any difference. He's had a letter a day from her for two years."

Mrs. Wesley looked thoughtful.

"Yes, that's so," she assented.

"I think what has used Cavell up so," went on his friend, "is the folly of it. Here are two people who might be so madly happy together if only the woman would be sensible, and the woman persists in behaving so abominably."

"Not that."

"Yes, just that."

"But she doesn't want to marry a man that she's never seen."

"Why doesn't she see him, then?"

"She can't see him after those letters."

"Rot! What was there in the letters?—an imaginary trip around the world, an imaginary house, and an imaginary baby—that was all."

"Oh, Mr. Elliston, there was a lot more. He always wrote that if he ever saw her he was going to kiss her—that very first time."

"Well, if he'd ever been given a chance he might have kept his word."

"But—but can't you see that after that she just *couldn't* see him?"

"What nonsense!"

"Well, she couldn't."

"Rot!"

"Mr. Elliston, no woman could deliberately plan to see a man for the first time who had declared he was going to behave like that. You can read it in the letter—the one in the blue envelope—it's right in this package—and it's simply awful. He says things that are dreadful. I'll show you——"

Mrs. Wesley was standing up. Her face was a deep carnation, and she was untying the package which she had brought.

"And I'll show *you*," said Elliston. "There's a letter here—" he reached for the other package as he spoke. "You just need to re-read it. She says what she likes is his not being

milk-and-watery, and how grand it was being swept up in his arms."

"But that was in the imaginary cottage in Brittany," wailed Mrs. Wesley.

"It will act equally well right here at home."

"But he ought not to——"

"Hold on!" said Elliston. "There's a letter here where she calls life in the cottage in Brittany ideal—it's written on ruled paper. I'll find it." He began to run over the huge sheaf of correspondence.

"Well, what if she did call it ideal?"

"Why, if she did call it ideal then Hugh's only defect seems to be that he wants to bring the ideal into daily life."

Mrs. Wesley sat down abruptly, put up her veil, and burst into tears.

"I think that you are horrid," she sobbed, "and I want to tell you right off that I knew all the time that you were Hugh Cavell; I asked the elevator man if you were still here, and he said, 'Yes.' And then to try and make me miserable this way—and to say he's ill—and to say you're unhappy——"

"Well, I am unhappy enough, God knows," said the man. "All my future is hanging in the balance, and I can't decide whether to shake you hard or kiss you as I said I would."

Mrs. Wesley started violently.

"Shake *me*!" she stammered.

"Oh, you *are* the biggest fool!" groaned Cavell. "You've forgotten completely that it was your portrait that I fell in love with first."

"Oh, my heavens!"

"You remember now!"

"And you haven't been angry?"

"Angry! I was writing you a love-letter when you came in." He crumbled it up in his hand and threw it into the fire as he spoke.

And then he snatched her fiercely up in his arms and strained her hard against his breast.

"There, take that—and that—and that——" he said brokenly. "I always vowed I'd kiss you if I saw you——"

"Y—y—yes——" came the answer.

"Oh, dear—I have to admit—that you—t—t—told the truth."

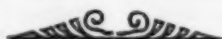
"And we'll be married, too," Cavell declared, "and go round the world—and——"

"Never mind," said his companion.

"I—we—that is—I'm quite willing—but—but never mind going into all that just now."

"No, of course not," said Cavell promptly.

Then he put both packages of letters into the safe, and took her out with him to luncheon.



THE SHADOWS

By Charlotte Becker

A JOY danced gaily down the way,
Light as a wind-blown leaf.
Ah! strange, that as she passed, there fell
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Vol. XIX

MAY, 1906

No. I

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The novelette to open the forthcoming number will be a story laid in France, with a charming American girl for the heroine. It is entitled

"The Hesitation of Gisella," By Edith MacVane

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There will be poems by Arthur Stringer, Mabel Earle, Charlotte Elizabeth Wells, Edward W. Barnard, Reginald Wright Kauffman, and others.

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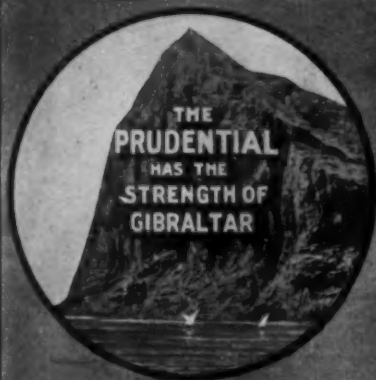
March 1st 1906

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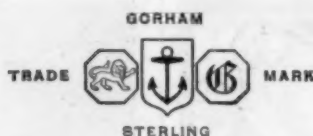
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THE TREASON OF THE SENATE

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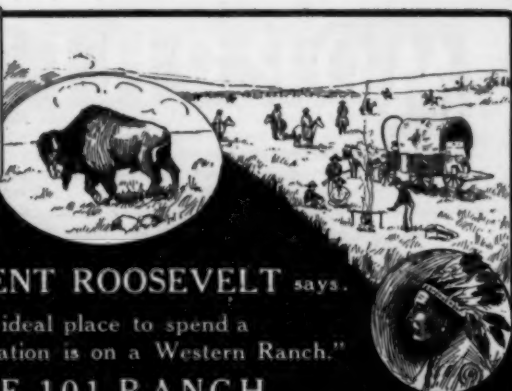
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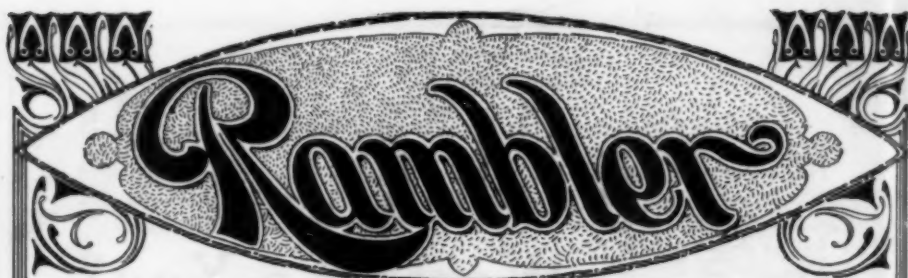
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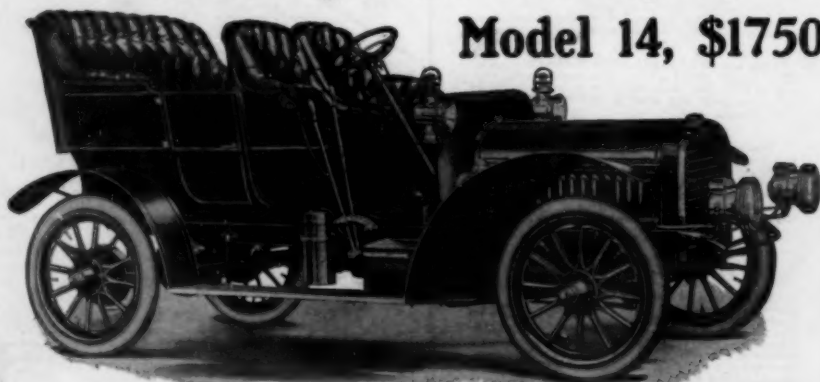
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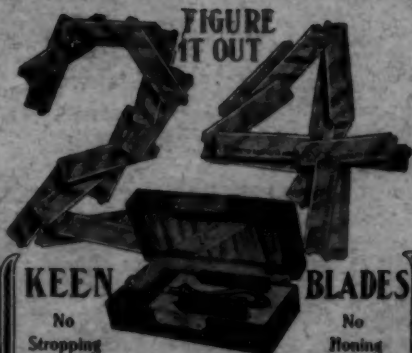
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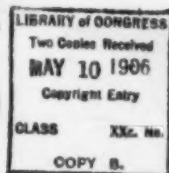
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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS



Vol. XIX

JUNE, 1906

No. 2

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THE JULY "SMART SET"

A brilliant novelette will open the forthcoming number—a story with a well-defined purpose, yet with an underlying thread of delightful humor. It is entitled

"The Purple Border," by Beatrix Demarest Lloyd

Short stories of a remarkably high standard will likewise appear. Among the writers will be found William Hamilton Osborne, Dorothea Deakin, J. J. Bell, Katharine Metcalf Roof, Anna McClure Sholl, and Charles Battell Loomis.

An essay by Richard Duff, called "Bohemia, New York," should find many readers; and there will be poems by Florence Wilkinson, Ernest McGaffey, Arthur Davison Ficke, Mabel Earle, Ethel M. Kelley, Arthur Stringer, Frank Dempster Sherman, and others.

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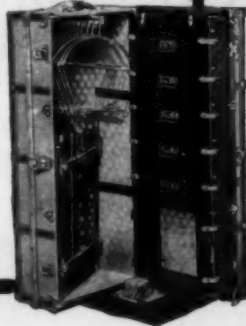
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The English Marconi Company, which was brought out previous to the American Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company, according to their annual statement, earned

SEVEN PER CENT. NET LAST YEAR.

A remarkable showing for a young company. The American Marconi Company, which is younger, has the advantage of all the English Company's expenditures and is growing rapidly, and with its much larger territory its earnings should be much greater.

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and, with many times a wider field of operation, affords greater opportunity for advance in securities.

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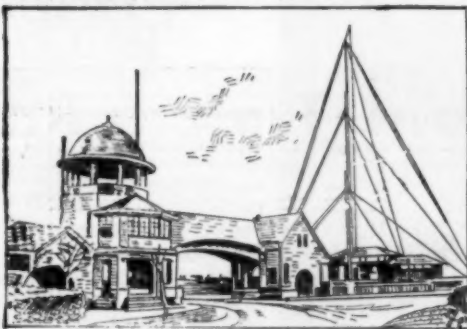
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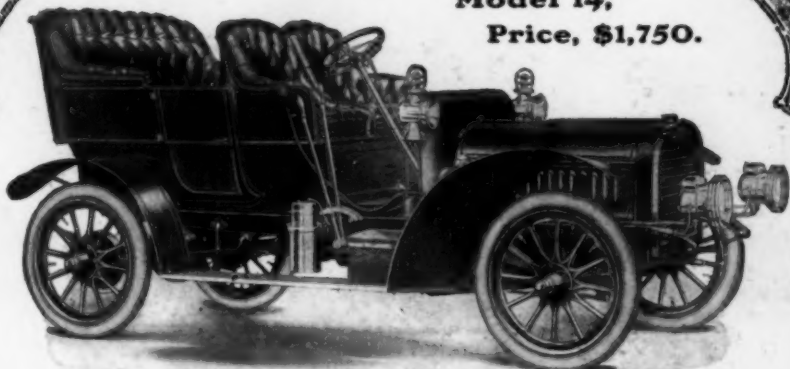
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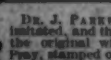
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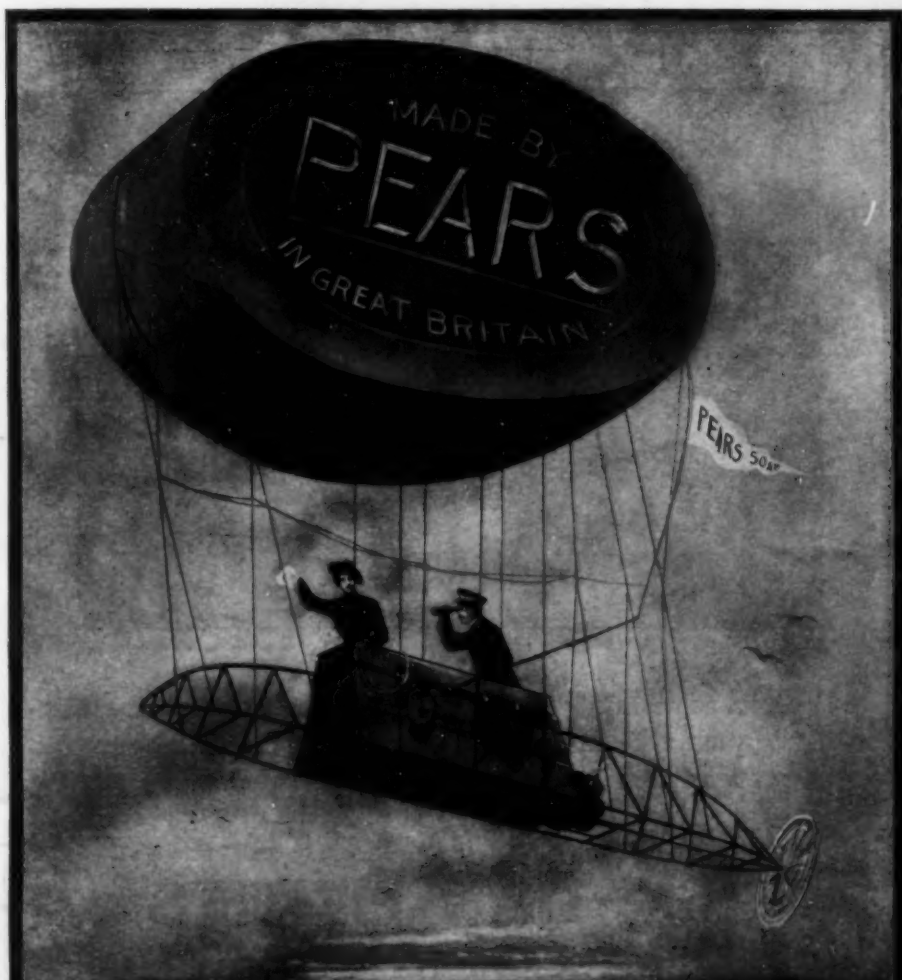
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The essay will be by Alvan F. Sanborn, entitled, "The French Talent for Living," and there will be delightful poems by Madison Cawein, Ethel M. Kelley, Florence Brooks, Frank L. Stanton, Edwin L. Sabin and Duncan Campbell Scott.

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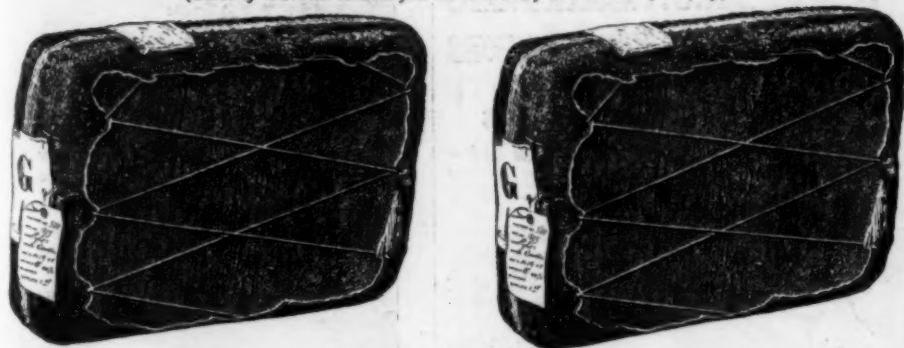
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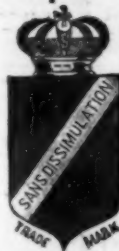
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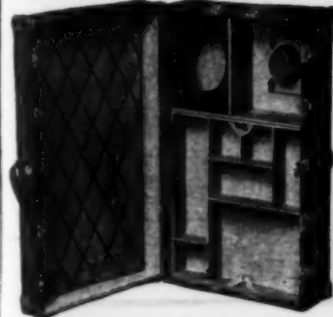
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THE SMART SET

Comprising the numbers for September, October, November and December, 1905, containing the following novelettes:

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WHEN CUPID CAME TO NINE-BAR
THE GAME AND THE CANDLE
BONDAGE

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By WILLIAM R. LIGHTON
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New York Nation—The little, motherless, wild Western girl wins sympathetic interest for herself and for the various animal friends so affectionately pictured, and if these letters seem to show more than the degree of sense commonly allotted to them, we are willing to believe that our stupidity may have more to do than theirs in fixing the accepted limit of animal intelligence.

New York Vanity Fair—The illustrations by Gustave Verbeck are in his most vigorous style. The full page, in which appear the great black bear facing the fury of a "chinook" wind in the mountains, an old Mexican trapper and a child at the log-cabin window, is delightfully realistic.

New York Times—Tenderly and gracefully the author tells of the love existing between a

girl and various animals. The stories are so natural that they look as if they were the actual experiences of a young life.

Albany Argus—The animals delineated with charming detail by Mrs. Porter are not hackneyed types familiar to the casual observer and to the zoölogist, but distinct individuals impossible to confuse with other individuals.

New York Evening Telegram—Lovers of animals will be delighted to make the acquaintance of the horses, dogs, foxes, pigs, raccoons, cats tame and wild, bears, crow and burro, whose romances are told in Alma Porter's "Nigger Baby and Nine Beasts."

Washington Post—Old and young lovers of animals will welcome the acquaintance of Mrs. Porter's friends.

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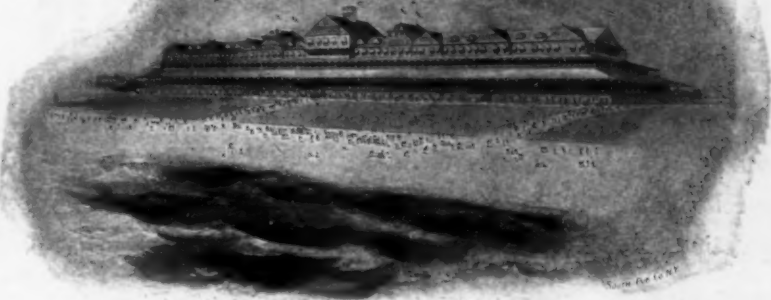
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JULY COSMOPOLITAN

Cosmopolitan for July continues to improve on the high standard of magazine excellence that it has set from month to month. This issue contains, among articles and stories of exceptional interest, the following:—

HOW THE ARMY WORKED TO SAVE SAN FRANCISCO, by Brig.-Gen. Frederick Funston, U. S. A.

A brilliant, soldierly narrative telling how the regular army labored in San Francisco after the earthquake, and during and after the fire completed the destruction of the city, to bring order out of chaos. General Funston tells the terrible truth of the catastrophe, and the splendid heroism of the stricken people. There are 16 illustrations—a selection best adapted to give **Cosmopolitan** readers an exact idea of the facts. Two large pictures, 25 inches long and folded into the issue, show panoramas of San Francisco before and after its destruction.

In these days of millionaires and men who make millions in a few years, poor girls who make millions in a day are not anomalies. The great men of the nation have risen from comparative poverty, and from the same station of life the beauty and wit of womanhood have come. From the stage, from the business office, from the slums, men of wealth have taken wives who have that beauty and innate culture which makes them fit their new station perfectly—as though to the manner born. These girls have elevated their husbands more than they have themselves been elevated in station.

POOR GIRLS WHO MARRY MILLIONS, by Lida Rose McCabe

(Truth is always stronger than fiction.)

THE TREASON OF THE SENATE, by David Graham Phillips

(Expose of Senator Bailey of Texas.)

The expose of the Senatorial methods of political debauchery continues in July **Cosmopolitan** with renewed vigor. Senator Bailey, of Texas, the "Democratic" leader of the "Merger," now falls under the lash of damnable facts. This article tells how Senator Bailey got the notorious Waters-Pierce Oil Co., a subsidiary company of the Standard, back into Texas after it had been driven out by the people, and but a month thereafter purchased the splendid and costly Grapevine Ranch, of 6,000 acres. This is one of the many acts which Senator Bailey has been unable to explain satisfactorily to thinking people of Texas.

By contrast with the "statesmen" of today, the political giants of this country's early history loom into colossal proportions; and the reading of their biographies points out what honesty of purpose in public life can accomplish. Andrew Jackson was one of those whole-souled, honest, shirt-sleeve statesmen who made this country's greatness possible. The "Story of Andrew Jackson" now running in the **Cosmopolitan**, is not a dry, matter-of-fact biography, but is a fascinating, brilliant historical novel, every word of which is true. Once having commenced to read it, you won't be able to lay the "Story of Andrew Jackson" aside.

STORY OF ANDREW JACKSON, by Alfred Henry Lewis

(An historical novel that is true.)

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I take pleasure in informing you that, commencing with the issue of September, the rate for advertising in THE SMART SET will be reduced from the present rate of \$250.00 to \$150.00 per page.

This rate will be pro rata down to $\frac{1}{8}$ page.

The rate for space of less than $\frac{1}{8}$ page will be \$1.00 per agate line.

This rate will be FLAT. No discounts for time or space.

The Ess Ess Publishing Co. guarantees that the monthly circulation of THE SMART SET shall exceed 140,000 copies.

We have printed and distributed of the August number 145,000 copies, and it is believed that the average monthly circulation for the year will not fall below 165,000 copies. All copies returned from the news-stands are promptly mailed as samples to lists of selected names throughout the United States. This is a fixed policy and will be continued, so that advertisers have the benefit in bona fide circulation of every copy printed.

This reduction of rate is made possible by the fact that THE SMART SET MAGAZINE is sold to the public at a price—25 CENTS—which insures a fair profit to the publisher without requiring the advertiser to pay the greater part of the cost of production.

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Kurt Wilson
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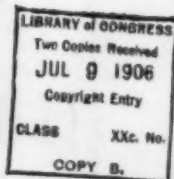
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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS



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AUGUST, 1906

No. 4

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THE SEPTEMBER "SMART SET"

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By Edna Kenton.

This is by far the most finished piece of work that has yet been done by Miss Kenton, whose stories have attracted such favorable comment among discriminating readers.

The short stories will be particularly entertaining and will come from the pens of such writers as E. F. Benson, Gouverneur Morris, Kellett Chambers, Pomona Penrin, Edwin L. Sabin, Arthur Stanley Wheeler, Harriet Gaylord and Vincent Harper.

The essay will be entitled, "Stage Conventions in Modern Times," by Clayton Hamilton; and there will be poems by Arthur Upson, Frank L. Stanton, Richard Kirk, Charlotte Becker, Roy Farrell Greene, and others.

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DEC 1 1933

Genius in Craftsmanship

CHARLES LAMB has somewhere said that "the man who first invented work bound down the free and holiday-making spirit." But Lamb was thinking only of himself and the many years he had spent chained to the wooden desk doing disagreeable tasks. He was not thinking of the real work he did, when he went home and sat down to write the famous essays which have endeared him to all mankind. He would have called that work "holiday-making," because it was congenial, pleasurable, and what he could best do.

Now what was true of Lamb is true of all of us. No good and no abiding work can be done under conditions which do not favor the freedom and the happiness of the individual worker. It is only where this principle is recognized that the product has the least chance of being a thing of beauty.

What is there in a vase by Cellini that compels our homage? Why is it that a book printed by Frobenius is a delight to look at even? In what lies the supreme quality of a fiddle by Amati or Stradivarius? Just these two important factors—the craftsman finding his freedom and pleasure in his work, and the sincerity of the workman to do himself justice by giving of his best. He must find pleasure in his work first, and then he must be honest in it.

We say that is a "Strad." or that is an "Amati" or a "Guarnerius," and the words suffice. Why? Because we know that these men of Cremona put in their work the best they knew and had a jolly good time doing it. Let a Kubelik or a Kreisler or an Ysaye play ever so finely, the homage we pay him we pay also to these master-craftsmen who, two centuries and a half ago, fashioned the musical instrument. Every note or chord from his violin praises the true spirit of those free and honest Italians.

In our own days conditions make for a worker different from this kind of craftsman. Competition and the struggle for existence are elbowing him off the track. There are still the few that are chosen, but most of these are keeping a torch burning lit by an ancestor. The general run are neither workmen nor freemen, in the right meaning of those words. And this is not because they do not want to be honest, nor because they would not enjoy a freedom to do what they best can do; but it is because they find the honest work does not pay, and also that they are supposed to be in business, not for their health, as the saying goes. The consequence of this is not merely bad work, but poor workmen and an ignorant public which rarely knows what it is to have an honest piece of work done for it. One of the reasons for this is to be found in our ignorance, which fosters conditions unfavorable to the taking of pains. We demand royal roads to the making of the perfect thing, not realizing that there are no royal roads, either in art or craft.

There is also another reason. We like to buy the cheap thing, forgetting that the perfect work cannot be cheap. Perfect work is produced only after years of thought and labor devoted to it by that rare creature we call genius. It should appeal to us as a gift of God. Shall we weigh our shekels by the scruple in balancing its worth? We gladly pay exorbitant fees to doctors and lawyers—and yet we murmur at being able to buy joy!

Yet, in a sense, we are to be excused. Antonio Stradivarius did not know how to advertise his wares, after the modern method. Probably he had no occasion to do it; there were not too many fiddle-makers in his days. He knew, no doubt, that the work itself would be his best advertisement, and he was right. People bought his fiddles then as they buy them now, because they are good. But, today, in this age of magazines of advertisements, we read of so many things that are perfect, that we are embarrassed in the midst of riches. The perfect work is put before us wherever we turn. Among so many masterpieces why bother about one name more than another? We choose at random only to find soon that we have paid dearly for our knowledge. We cannot afford to try again, and we ask for the name that stands today, as did STRADIVARIUS

Charles
Lamb and
the Spirit
of Work

The
Workman
Must be
Free and
Happy
Work
Must be
Pleasure-
giving and
Sincere to
be Good
Work

The Work
Praises the
Workman

Bad Work
Demoraliz-
ing the
Public

No Royal
Road to the
Making of
the Perfect
Thing

Money No
Equivalent
for the
Perfect
Thing

Good Work
Is the Best
Advertise-
ment

Genius in Craftsmanship

Which is
the Best
Piano?
Baltimore
His
Home

Baltimore
Before
the War

The First
Home of
America's
Greatest
Piano

Success
Attends the
Fine Work
of the
Baltimore
Maker

of old—a name the mention of which shall imply sincerity, honesty, and the realization of the craftsman's ideal in objective form.

It was to answer this question that we interested ourselves in a craft that deals not with violins, but with another music-producing instrument, namely, THE PIANO.

We had searched over many states, and in widely scattered cities, and it was only after much wandering that we found ourselves finally in the charming and quaint old city of Baltimore. We were drawn to it by reading in a magazine the story of a German piano-maker who had left his native town of Kreuzburg, in Saxe-Weimar, a country made famous by the immortal Goethe, and had settled there in the year of grace 1833. In 1833, Baltimore was a great port, perhaps the most important on our coasts. Its merchants were wealthy and cultured; its centers of education ancient and distinguished; its teachers men of enlightenment and its society refined. What better place for a craftsman nursed in the very home of Schiller and Goethe? He was poor, very poor, but his spirit was strong and his mind rich. For four years he worked at his trade of cabinet-making; saved all the money he could out of a

cottage in which to live and give play to his holiday making spirit to the purpose of his genius.

Not Cristofori, nor Schroter, nor Silbermann, nor Stein, nor Broadwood was happier in his workshop than was this poor, but inspired, German in his little back room with its simple bench; for his work, like theirs, was to be the making of pianos. Like them also, he would build to give out worthily the music that asked for worthy expression, so that his instruments should not only resound to the great glory of the musician, and the artist, but should also praise the sincere and humble craftsman. Strange to say,

he prospered. It was with him, as it had been with Stradivarius, two hundred years before him—the work was the Master's

praise. The people of the South, before the war, knew that a piano from the Baltimore maker required no introduction other than his name on the instrument—that meant everything; and, before the war, the people of the South, knew a good thing when they saw it. But, after the war the people of Baltimore discovered that a new craft had grown up and was flourishing in their midst. The little cottage had become a great workshop,



The Great Baltimore Piano-Maker



The First Home of the Knabe Piano

wage smaller than a clerk commands now, and, in 1837, found himself in a position where he might safely rent a one-story

and the single worker had raised two sons to help him, and these two, in their turn, two other sons to help them; workmen were com-

Genius in Craftsmanship

ing from the craft guilds of the Old World to assist and contribute their skill; and the Fatherland was sending its sons to their brother the new King, in the far-off country, to make purchase of his stores, and the brother sent them back rejoicing.

Such was the story we read, and, reading it, we seemed as if transported from the twentieth century back to the early seventeenth, to the time when one Andreo Amati

An Extraor-
dinary
Phenomenon



Ernest J. Knabe



William Knabe, II

had a son Jerome, and he a son Nicolo, and the traditions of the craft were being handed down from father to son like the holy fire of some mystical cult. This phenomenon in these days was certainly an extraordinary one. We determined to look into it for ourselves, for here, evidently, was something worth while.

The result of our visit was that the outline of the story we have just given took shape

A Great
Study in
Evolution



Ernest J. Knabe, Jr.



William Knabe, III

in an experience which added to our knowledge of human ability in a measure greater than we had ever hoped to obtain. For the first time we saw the sincerity and the genius of the seventeenth century craftsman married to twentieth century conditions and methods. It was a splendid study in evolution of the profoundest import.

Genius in Craftsmanship

The Effect
of the
Perfect
Piano on
the Mind

Here was not a workshop, but a series of great factories, covering acres of ground, linked together, and serving each other for the purpose of a master mind. They were filled with workmen making holiday at their work, finding delight in their several crafts and together enthusiastically playing the game of making thought visible, reaching the goal in the perfect pianos we saw completed in the show-rooms. As we looked at the finished instruments after a long day spent in passing from floor to floor and workshop to workshop in evolving sequence, it seemed to us as if we had been present at a veritable transmigration of the ideal to the real—the mute inglorious soul had evolved and become the golden-voiced instrument of undying harmonies. We touched one of the beautiful productions and the thought came to us that we were clasping the thousand honest hands that had shaped its gracious form and fashioned its harmonious parts. The notes responded to our touch with their full and rounded tones. There spoke the action-makers, the stringers, the sounding-board workers, the frame-makers, the wood-selectors, the varnishers, the fine-tone testers. And the sound spelt the words, "*We are of the best.*" Then we remembered the words of the foremen of the various departments. "*We put in nothing but the best,*" they had said to us, and they had corroborated their statement by showing us each separate process, each single piece of wood, string, felt, leather, aye, even the glue. Where a mere hole might suffice, the workman showed us how he added some material or made some alteration which made a possibility nearer a certainty. Chance, so far as possible, must be eliminated.

The Right
Materials
for the
Perfect
Piano are
Organic

Experience has shown that the minutest details and the materials of which each separate part is made are, to the perfect piano, organic. A poorly made action, for instance, is, to a piano, what a diseased heart is to a human being. Therefore, the wood is kept drying for years; the wire is of the finest and strongest; the frame fit to stand the tension of many tons; the varnish and glue of the choicest quality; the sounding-board so cunningly pieced together that the whole forms one solid sheet of galleries for the perfect play of sound waves; the actions so felted and fitted that nothing can stop them in their just impact or their just retreat. It is a wonderful whole this co-existence of mutually assisting parts we call a piano. But more wonderful is the genius that produces it.

The Maker
Gives the
Soul and
Character
to the
Instrument

As with the violin, so with the piano, mere materials, however good they may be, cannot give to the completed thing the soul and character which are the distinguishing elements of its individuality. If they could all pianos would be alike, and there would be no greater virtue in one than in another. One maker's instruments would be just as good as another maker's. But experience shows us that this is not so. Experience proves that the virtue in a piece of human work, especially in a piano, is the virtue of the man shaping it. It is the man's own sterling worth, the man's own peculiar insight, the man's genius that count and make his piano different from another maker's piano.

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KNABE
Stands
Today as
Did Stradivarius 250
Years Ago

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Detail

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on Any
Instrument
Is
Everything
KNABE
explains the
Mystery of
the Work
of Genius

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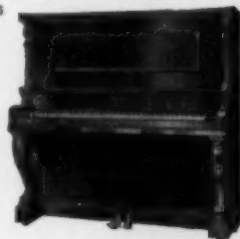
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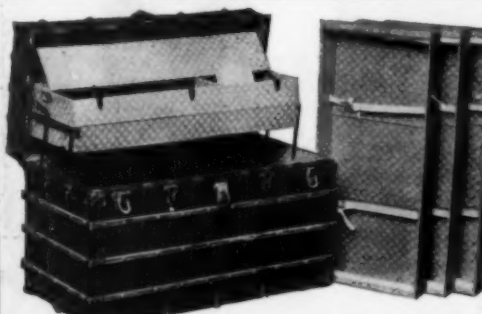
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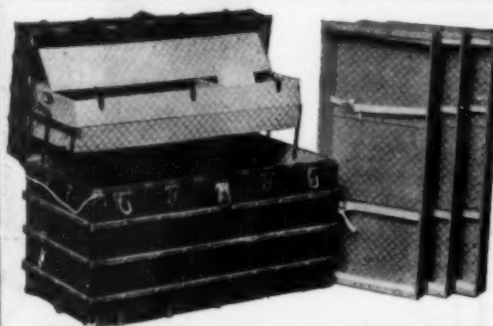


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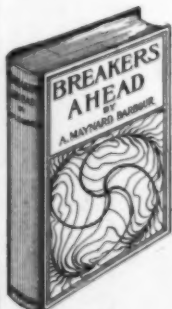
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